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F. J. Blake

THE
MONTHLY PACKET

OF
EVENING READINGS

FOR

Members of the English Church.

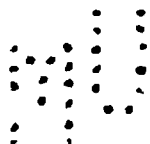
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THE
MONTHLY PACKET
OF
EVENING READINGS

For Members of the English Church.

JULY, 1875.

ODDS AND ENDS OF WEATHER WISDOM AND FRAGMENTS OF FOLK LORE.

MAY.

Now the bright morning star, day's harbinger,
Comes dancing from the East, and leads with her
The flowery May, who from her green lap throws
The yellow cowslip and the pale primrose.

Milton.

THE merry month of May is by far the most popular in the whole year, at least if the traditions of our forefathers, the customs that still linger among us, and last, but not least, the writings of the poets, are any guide for us to go by. These last are never tired of singing the praises of what the *Spectator* calls the—

‘Charming, charming month of May.’

So much so, indeed, that it would be useless to attempt to quote all that has been said in her favour, or all the complimentary epithets that have been lavished upon her by Lydgate, Chaucer, Jonson, and Herrick, to say nothing of more modern writers.

The name May itself seems rather a vexed question, for almost every writer that I have seen either gives or suggests a different origin for it. Richardson says, that Marlinius derives it from ‘a majoribus,’ from the growth of vegetable nature at this season, while Brâchet is of opinion that it comes from the Latin ‘Madius,’ a form for ‘Maius’ found in the medieval Latin.* And Brady thinks that ‘Romulus continued to this month the name of Mauis out of respect to the councillors or senate appointed to assist him when he was elected king, who were distinguished by the epithet of majores’—though he further adds that, ‘some authors assert that it is derived from Maduis, ‘eo quod tunc terra madeat’—while others affirm that the name came from ‘Maia,’ the mother of Mercury, to

* “Tunc etiam mensis madius florebat in herbis,” says a twelfth-century poem

whom the Romans offered sacrifices on the first ; but ' this is the less probable since, with the exception of March, which was named after Mars, there seems no allusion to the heathen mythology in the names of the months ; ' certainly this is a case in which one cannot presume to offer an opinion, for ' Who shall decide when doctors disagree ? ' The Saxon name, ' Tri milki, ' is much simpler and more intelligible, even without Vorstigan's explanation, that ' the pleasant moneth of May they termed by the name of Tri milki, because in that moneth they began to milke their kine three times a day. '

May is so rich every way, that it is difficult to tell where to begin ; perhaps, however, it will be as well to do so with the few things for which it is unfavourable ; for instance, a May marriage is very unlucky—*

' If you marry in May
You'll rue the day. '

the reason being that—

' If you marry in May
You'll wed poverty, '

and also—

' The bairns will die of a decay. '

Consequently,

' The girls are all stark naught that wed in May. '

This belief is a very old one, and appears to have been a bequest left us by the Romans, since, according to *Notes and Queries*, it is one of those superstitions which have descended to Christianity from Pagan observances, which the people have adopted without knowing the cause or being able to assign a reason. It was evidently of long standing in Ovid's time,† as it had then passed into a proverb with the people, and nearly two centuries afterwards Plutarch vainly endeavoured to find a satisfactory origin for the belief. He gives three reasons, first—because May, being between April and June, and April being consecrated to Venus, and June to Juno, these deities held propitious to marriage were not to be slighted. Secondly—on account of the great expiatory celebration of the Lemuria, when women abstain from the bath and from the careful cosmetic decoration of their persons, so necessary a prelude to the marriage rites. Thirdly—because May was the month of old men (' majus a majoribus '), and therefore, June being thought to be the month of the young (' junius a junioribus '), was to be preferred.

But if our forefathers married at the wrong time, they must have

* In Roman Catholic countries the dislike to May marriages is said to come from this month being the ' Mois de Marie, ' and dedicated to the blessed Virgin.

† ' Nec, viduæ tædis eadem nec virginis apta
Tempora. Quæ nupsit non diuturna fuit
Hac quoque de causa (si te proverbia tangunt)
Mense malum est Maiæ nubere vulgus ait. '—*Fasti*.

This last line was fixed on the gate of Holyrood on the morning (May 16) after the marriage of Mary Queen of Scots and Bothwell.

‘sinned with their eyes open,’ for they could not possibly have erred through ignorance, since they had no lack of instruction and advice upon this point, for independently of the dislike to May, there was a saying—

‘Who marrys between the sickle and the scythe
Will never thrive,’

probably because the time between haying and harvest being the busiest season of the year with the husbandman, he ought to be too much occupied with his practical concerns to have any leisure to spare for thinking of his wedding, which ought consequently to be postponed till ‘winter time, the time for wooing.’

A still more explicit rule taught how—

‘Advent marriage doth deny,
But Christmas gives thee liberty.
Septuagesima says thee nay.
Eight days from Easterday* you may.
Rogation bids thee to remain,
But Hilary sets thee free again.’

And in order that nothing might be neglected, they even added some directions respecting the colour of the clothes that were to be worn, for—

‘If you marry in green
Your sorrow’s soon seen.’

But then green, the ‘good people’s colour,’ is always unpropitious; indeed, the Sussex damsels have a saying—

‘Those drest in blue have lovers true,
But green and white’s forsaken quite.’

For everyone (whose attention has been turned to such matters) knows that—

‘Blue is beauty, red’s a token;
Green’s grief, and yellow’s forsaken.’

Or another version is—

‘Blue is love true, but green’s love dune.’†

May is also an unfavourable month for invalids, for not only does a warm May make a fat churchyard, but May hill is hard to climb; and, ‘it’s weary work getting up May hill,’ which last two sayings are often quoted on behalf of people who feel the languor and fatigue consequent on the first really warm weather. Moreover, any illness, no matter what, which you have for the first time in May, will always return at the same time every year, with the exception of the whooping-cough, which is never

* Between Easter and Whitsuntide the unfortunate make love.

† ‘Blue’s true,
Yellow’s jealous,
Green’s forsaken,
Red’s brazen,
White’s love, and black’s death.’

lost till May.* Still, for every evil under the sun, there is a remedy or there is none, and in this case the remedy may be found in two simple prescriptions which can only be used during this month, and which are consequently worth recording, even though one may not feel inclined to experiment upon them oneself. The first is—

‘If you would be wise and gay,
(Or if you would live for aye,)
You must eat butter and sage in May.’

While—

‘If you eat leeks in Lide (March) and ramsins in May,
All the year after the physicians may play.’†

You must be careful about your brushes and brooms at this time of the year too, or the consequences may be serious, for—

‘If you sweep the house with blossom broom in May,
You will sweep the head of the house away,’

or at any rate, you will sweep one of the family away.

There is a common superstition in the south of England, that if a piece of broom is brought into the house in blossom in May it will bring death with it, while white thorn is also to be avoided, for if you are unwise enough to sleep with a piece of it in your room during this month you will be troubled by frightful dreams, and some great misfortune will happen to you. The scent of the flowers would probably be quite enough to account for the first of these evils, while the latter may have arisen from the fact that this plant was under the special protection of the ‘good people,’ who certainly knew how to resent any encroachment on their rights, at least if there was any truth in the rhyme—

‘He who tills the fairies green,
No luck again shall hae.
And he who spills the fairies’ ring,
Betide him want and wae ;
For weirdless days and weary nights
Are his to his dying day.’

Though they knew how to reward as well, for—

‘He who goes by the fairy green,
No dule nor pine shall see.
And he who cleans the fairies’ ring,
An easy death shall dee.’

In some parts of Switzerland it is thought unlucky to bring may-blossom into the house even in the daytime, but this is not the case in England, for in Suffolk, it was customary to give the servant who brought a flowering branch of hawthorn into the house on may morning a bowl

* I said to-day to a man, whose child had the whooping cough, ‘He ought to lose it now ;’ but the man said, ‘You see the beans ain’t in flower yet, and they say the cough always waits for them to blow.’ It is well for this, that—

‘Be it for well or be it for woe,
Beans flower before May doth go.’

† *Allium ursinum*.

of cream for breakfast as a reward.* While Scott speaks of the hanging-up white thorn gathered on the first of May, as a safeguard against witches; and Aubrey mentions a similar practice in Germany. The hawthorn is also a protection against lightning, for Langham tells us, in his *Garden of Health*, that the white thorn is never stricken, a fact which is duly impressed upon the minds of most country children by the rhyme—

‘Beware of an oak,
It draws the stroke.
Take care of the ash,
It courts the crash.
Creep under the thorn,
It will save you from harm.’

And I have been told that the Normandy peasants have the same belief, and may often be seen with a sprig of thorn stuck in their hats as a security against danger, but they think that the thorn derives its power from being the material of which our blessed Lord’s crown was made,† and this is the reason why Frenchwomen may often be seen praying before a hawthorn tree; and we also find the same idea in the old ‘thorn charm,’ which is still often used in the south of England,‡ while the tradition is also mentioned by Sir Jchn Mandeville. ‘Then was our Lord yled into a gardyne . . . and there the Jewes scorned hym and made hym a crowne of the braunch of albespyne, that is whyte thorne, that grewe in the same gardyn, and setten yt upon hys heved. And therefore hathe the whyte thorne many vertues, for he that beareth a braunch on hym thereof no thondre ne no manner of tempest may dere (hurt) him ne in the hous that yt is ynne may no euel ghost entre.’

‘Welcome as flowers in May,’ says the old proverb, and there are certainly no lack of these, for the white thorn is by no means the only flower that can lay claim to the title of ‘May;’ indeed, almost every country seems to have a ‘May’ of its own—in Germany, the lily of the valley, the caltha, and the hepatica, are all called the ‘Mai blume;’ and in North America there is the May apple,§ and the May hop, and the *Epigæa repens* is the May-flower of New England,§ while the *Gardener’s Chronicle* gives a list of many English plants, such as the marsh marigold (or May-blob), the lady’s smock; the lilac in Cornwall and Devon, and the sycamore flowers, &c., which are ‘Mays.’

Besides flowers, ‘May’ has some living creatures belonging to it, for instance, the yellow-hammer, which in Scotland is called the devil’s bird, is connected with the month by the saying—

‘The brock (badger), the toad, and the yellow, yellow yeorling,
Get a drop of the devil’s blood every May morning.’

* *Gardener’s Chronicle*, No. 70, vol. iii.

† ‘Our Saviour Christ was of a pure virgin born,
Upon his head he wore a thorn,
It did not rage, and it did not swell,
And I trust in God that this shall do well.’

‡ *Podophyllum*.

§ *Passiflora incarnata*.

And I suppose that is the reason why the poor little bird is pursued with such deadly animosity by the generality of school-boys, who, however, decline to give any explanation for their dislike to it, beyond the rather vague assertion that it's 'no good,' though I believe in the north of England the yellow-hammer is accused of being or taking (I am not sure which)—

‘ Half a paddock (frog), half a toad,
Half a drop of devil's blood,
Mixed together to do thee good,
Horrid yellow yeowling !

The magpie is another of the ‘ May birds ’ against which a strong prejudice exists. In Sussex it is accused of being ‘ too clever by half,’ and knowing more than it has any right to know ; while this undue knowledge is accounted for in the north of England by the fact, ‘ that the magpie was the only bird who refused to accompany Noah into the ark, because it wished to stay outside and see what went on.’* Everybody knows the magpie rhyme, how—

‘ One's for sorrow, two's for mirth,
Three for a wedding, four for a birth,
Five you will shortly be
In a great company,’

and I have been told that this great company is supposed to mean your own funeral. It is further considered very rash indeed to allow a magpie to pass unsaluted. This is generally done by simply touching the hat, or making a bow ; and I have known people, when they thought that their companion either through ignorance or foolhardiness was going to omit the ceremony, insist upon performing it themselves. But in Lincolnshire it is a more elaborate affair, for there you are required to turn completely round, and exclaim while doing so, ‘ Round about, round about, magoty pie ;’ † while another address is—

‘ Magpie, magpie, chatter and flee,
Turn your tail for good luck to me.’

The German and Swedish belief carries us a little further back in the history of the magpie, and gives us a reason for the dislike which we in the true English fashion have retained without troubling ourselves for the cause. The magpie is the witches' bird, and is employed to carry them to Blocksberg on the night before the first of May, so that no magpies are to be seen on May-day, as they have not had time to get back from their journey ; while in Brunswick it is said that the witches took the form of magpies when they went to Blocksberg ; while, when the birds moult in summer, and lose their neck feathers, they are said to have been to Blahilli, helping the devil to get his hay in, and that the yoke has rubbed

* Henderson, *Folk Lore*.

† Magotpie was the old name for a magpie. Shakespeare says, in ‘ Macbeth ’—

‘ Augurs and understood relations have,
By magotpies, and choughs, and rooks, brought forth
The secret'st man of blood.’

the feathers off. Another belief is that it is very unlucky to be born in May, for a child whose birthday falls in this month is always either sickly or unfortunate; while a kitten that is born at this time will never be a good mouser, and indeed, had better not be preserved alive, for 'a May kitten makes a dirty cat.'

May, in spite of its being the first of—

'Those four sad months wherein is mute
The one mysterious letter that has power
To call the oyster from the vasty deep,'*

is more favourable to the fish than it is to the birds. 'Plaice are never good till they swim in May water;' while 'haddock are also no gude till they get three drops o' May flude,' and both these creatures have a story of their own. Mr. Campbell was told by his landlady at Port Erin, 'how the fish all gathered to choose a king, and the fluke (him that has the red spots on him), stayed at home to make himself pretty, putting on his red spots to see if he would be chosen, but he was too late, for when he came the herring was already king of the sea. So the fluke curled his mouth on one side, and said, 'A simple fish like the herring king of the sea,' and his mouth has been all of one side ever since.'† While the haddock is said to be quite deaf, by the Cornish fishermen, because once upon a time when the devil was fishing, his bait was perpetually carried off by a haddock; getting furious, the devil put his face to the water till his mouth almost touched the fish's ear, and cried out, 'Ha Dick: I'll tackle thee yet.' The sound was so loud that it cracked the drums of the fish's ears, and ever since, he and his descendants have been stone deaf, and have always been called Ha Dicks, or haddocks.‡ The haddock seems to have been peculiarly subject to the attacks of the Evil One, for in Arnason's Icelandic legends, a somewhat similar story is given. The devil wished to catch fish in the sea, so he groped about in the water till he found a haddock. He grasped it under the breast-fin, where, since that gripe, a dark stripe is to be seen each side of the fin. The haddock gave a strong spring and slipped from the devil's hand, and the dark stripe upon both sides of the fish show the claw-marks of his enemy.§

Bees come next on the list, for—

'A swarm of bees in May
Is worth a load of hay,
(Or a pound next day.)
A swarm of bees in June
Is worth a silver spoon.
A swarm of bees in July
Is not worth a fly.'

* The same rule about the letter *r* holds good with regard to fires. It is very unlucky to have a fire burning when there is no *r* in the month.

† Campbell's *Tales of the Highlands*, vol. i. lv.

‡ *Autobiography Cor. Rector*.

§ The haddock is called St. Peter's haddock in Norway, and the marks on each side of the mouth are supposed to be the marks left by his finger and thumb when he took the piece of money out of its mouth.

There are many superstitions belonging to the bees. In the first place, they must never be sold, but always given. But if anyone should be so ill advised as to offer money for them, he must on no account think of giving anything but gold (half a sovereign is the usual sum). The bees are very tenacious of their rights, and expect to be treated as members of the family with whom they live, and have all that happens whether good or bad told them as soon as possible. 'That is news for the bees,' was a Kentish old woman's exclamation, when she heard of a very unexpected piece of good fortune which was about to befall her, and off she trotted forthwith to let them know what had happened; while in Sussex, if the bees are the first to be told of a proposed marriage, the courtship will be respectable and creditable throughout; but woe betide the couple who have neglected to pay them this attention. The death of the master of the house must be told them by some member of the family rapping on the side of the hive with the door key, and saying, 'Bees, bees, your *friend* (not master), Mark Gorringer is dead, and his son John begs you to work for him.' Sometimes black crape is tied to the hives, and cake and beer are given to the bees on the day of the funeral, but care must be taken that a woman is always the bearer of the tidings, as the bees will not allow men to bring them news. There is a particular rhyme which ought to be used on these occasions, but I have never been able to get it, as it is fatal to repeat it unnecessarily, and equally fatal to postpone telling the bees, since they will die if it is not done at once. If bees make their home in the roof of the house none of the women of the family will marry; while if they swarm on a railing or a dry stick, it is a sign of death, and I have been told of a poor woman who actually died of fright because this had happened. Another belief is that if the family place is let the bees will always go away, but they will return as soon as their lawful owners come back; while if a stranger comes to live with the family she must be presented to the bees with all due form and ceremony, otherwise they will take a dislike to her and 'spite her.' Finally, bees are very great lovers of justice, and will never stay with anyone who has committed any great crime, so that, if bees who have been long established in a place suddenly desert it, country people are very apt to conclude that everything is not as it should be there, though I am afraid that the bees' evidence would not go for much in a court of justice; and perhaps this is as well when all things are considered. Lastly among the May creatures comes the lady-bird, the 'Mai Katt' (May cat) of the Elbe; the 'Marienwürmchen' of the Prussians; the 'Maikaferchen' and the 'Guldvogel' of Germany; 'la petite vache du bon Dieu' * of Bretagne, and 'our dear lady's little beast' in Holland. Endless are the rhymes in its honour from the German—

* The lady-bird is called 'God-Almighty-cow' in Sussex, and the same ('Vaca de Dios') in Spanish. The name lady-bird, according to Kelly, points originally to Freyja, but subsequently to the Virgin. In Sweden the lady-bird is called 'Our Holy Virgin's Bowermaid,' or the 'Gold Cow.' In the South of England it is sometimes 'Fly Golding.' Halliwell's *Popular Rhymes*.

‘Marienwürmchen, setz’ dich
 Auf meine Hand. Auf meine Hand
 Ich thu’ dir nichts zu Leide.
 Es soll dir nichts zu Leide gescheh’n :
 Will nur deine bunte Flügel seh’n,
 Bunte Flügel, meine Freude.’
 ‘Marienwürmchen, fliege weg ;
 Dein Häuschen brennt, die Kinder schrei’n
 So sehre ! wie so sehre !
 Die böse Spinne spinnt sie ein.
 Marienwürmchen, flieg hinein ;
 Deine Kinder schreien sehre.’ *

(which last verse is said to be the original of our nursery rhyme, ‘Lady-bird, lady-bird, fly away home,’) to the Prussian, ‘May-bird fly, thy father is at the war, thy mother is in Pomerania. Pomerania is burnt. May-bird fly’ while our own Sussex rhyme—

‘Bishop, Bishop Barnabee,†
 Tell me when my wedding’s to be.
 If it be to-morrow day,
 Open your wings and fly away,’

may be also met with in Normandy, where the insect is M. Barabé, and it is desired to *dites-moi quand seront mes nocces*, while the Scotch version is the prettiest of all—

‘Lady, Lady Lanners,
 Lady, Lady Lanners,
 Take your cloak about your head,
 An’ flee away to Flanners.
 Flee owre firth and flee owre fell,
 Flee owre pool and running well,
 Flee owre moor and flee owre mead,
 Flee owre living, flee owre dead ;
 Flee owre corn and flee owre lea,
 Flee owre the river, flee owre the sea ;
 Flee ye east, or flee ye west,
 Ye’ll fly to him that loves me best.’ ‡

The lady-bird, probably from its having been so intimately connected with the old Northern mythology, is still one of the most prophetic of creatures. To see a lady-bird is lucky, and the ‘more the merrier,’ for the more you see the more fortunate you will be. While both in Sweden and England, if a lady-bird crawls over a girl’s hands, it is said to be measuring her for her wedding gloves. ‘Plenty of lady-birds, plenty of hops,’ may be one of those fancies which have a root of fact belonging to them, for the lady-birds are the ‘farmer’s friends’ in the hop-growing

* There is a translation of this old song given by Mr. Taylor in the English edition of Grimm’s *Haus-Märchen*.

† It is suggested in *Notes and Queries* that this name either means the Blessed Bee, or comes from the colour of the insect, or alludes to the Bairn or Box Bishop.

‡ See Gay’s *Shepherds’ Week*, where Hobnelia says—

‘This lady-bird I take from off the grass,
 Whose spotted back might scarlet-red surpass ;
 Fly lady-bird, north, south, or east or west,
 Fly where the man is found that I love best.’

districts. It is invariably supposed to predict fine weather, while in Sweden if the black spots on the wing-covers of the lady-birds exceed seven, the usual number, it is thought that corn will be dear, but if they are fewer a plentiful harvest is expected.

Proverbial wisdom tends to prove what experience has probably already taught us, that May is a cold rather than a hot month, for all nations join in the advice—

‘Cast not a clout till May be out.’

The Scotch further add—

‘Who doffs his coat on a winter’s day
Will gladly put it on in May.’

While in the north of Italy you are recommended not to put away your winter clothes till the 4th of May,* and the Spaniards say piteously, ‘May dear May, you may have all the roses if I may have a warm coat.’ The German proverb takes us back again to the hawthorn once more—

‘Wenn der Mai den Maien bringet,
Ist es besser als wenn er ihn findet.’

And so does the French—

‘Quand le buisson blanc entre en fleur,
Crains toujours quelque fraîcheur.’

Still, though a cold May enriches no one, it does some good, for a cold May gives good wine and much hay, and Ray gives the saying: ‘A cold May and a windy makes a fat barn and a findy;’ and also: ‘Come she early, or come she late, May’ll make the cow quake,’ to which he gives a note: ‘May seldom passes without a brunt of cold weather. Some will have it thus: “*She’ll bring the cow-quake,*” i.e. *Gramem tremulum*, which is true, but I suppose not the intent of the proverb.’ A Yorkshire proverb tells us also to be careful during this month, for

‘Those who bathe in May
Will soon be laid in clay.
Those who bathe in June
Will sing a merry tune.
Those who bathe in July
Will dance like a fly.’

Opinions differ about a wet May. In the Basque they say ‘A wet May is a fruitful year,’ while in England, ‘Though a May-flood never did good, yet, if there is water in May, there is bread all the year;’ while in Corsica, ‘A rainy May brings little barley, and no wheat;’ and in Brescia they say, ‘A dry May, corn everywhere;’ and in Scotland there are two sayings which contradict each other point blank, namely:

‘A dry May and a leaking June
Bring all things into tune.’

While.

‘A leaking May and a dry June
Keeps the poor man’s head abune.’

* I suppose the same reason holds good with sheep, for—

‘If you shear your sheep in May
You’ll shear them all away.’

Anyway, though May and June are sisters, they do not agree in their conduct, for, 'A dry May makes a dripping June,' and *vice versa*; but I suppose the cows must approve of rain at this time, since, according to Isaak Walton,* it is called 'May butter.'

The first of May is so rich in itself that it is almost useless to endeavour to give anything like the slightest sketch of its customs, far less their origin here. Besides being St. Philip and St. James day, it was also 'Robin Hood's day.' The day which poor Bishop Latimer found too well kept to please him, for he mentions in his sixth sermon before King Edward VI. that 'I came once myself to a place riding a journey homeward from London, and sent word over night into the town that I would preach there in the morning because it was a holyday, and I took my horse and my company and went thither. I thought I should have found a great company in the church. When I came there the church door was fast locked. I tarried there half-an-hour and more. At last the key was found, and one of the parish comes to me and says, "This is a busy daye with us; we cannot here you. This is Robin Hoode's daye. The parish is gone abroad to gather for Robin Hoode." I thought my rochet should have been regarded, though I were not; but it would not serve, but was fayne to give place to Robin Hoode's men.' He adds indignantly: 'Under the pretence of gathering for Robin Hoode, a traitor and a thief, to put out a preacher,' but Robin Hood † was an important person in those days, and so was the 'bigging' his bower, and the bringing home the May on this the first grand summer holiday. Nowadays the bishop might preach as long as he liked, and find nothing to disturb for ever the Jacks in the Green, and the dear old garlands are waxing few and far between, and fading away before the baneful influence of compulsory attendance. Some of the rhymes which used to be used on these occasions still linger among us. At Islip in Oxford, according to Mr. Halliwell, the children sing as they go round the village:—

'Good morning, missus and measter,
I wish you a happy day;
Please to smell my garland,
'Cause it's the first of May.'

While at a watering place on the south coast this May-day, I heard the third and last verse of the old May song repeated; but the children had never heard that there was any more, when I asked them about it, and

* I. Walton's *Complete Angler*, c. v. Piscator says, 'I promise to tell you more of the fly-fishing for a trout, which I may have time enough to do, for you see it rains May butter.'

† A wind after a thaw is called in Cheshire 'Robin Hood's wind,' the reason given being that Robin Hood could stand anything but a thaw wind. I am afraid Robin Hood was by no means singular in his tastes, for the three coldest winds that came to Fion M'Cooil were—the wind from a thaw, the wind from a hole, and wind from under the sails. There is a Sussex rhyme about the second of these:—

'If the wind come to you through a hole,
Say your prayers and look to your soul.'

the little bit they remembered was very incorrectly repeated. The whole song, as given in Hone, is :—

‘ (Remember us, poor Mayers all,
And thus we do begin
To lead our lives in righteousness,
Or else we die in sin.

‘ We have been rambling all this night,
And almost all this day,
And now returning back again
We have brought you a branch of May.)

Third.—‘ A branch of May (garland) we have brought (it) you,
And at your door it stands.
It is but a sprout, but it's well budded out,
'Tis (by) the work of our Lord's (own) hands.

‘ (The hedges and trees they are so green,
As green as any leek,
Our Heavenly Father He watered them
With his heavenly dew so sweet.

‘ The heavenly gates are open wide,
Our paths are beaten plain,
And if a man be not too far gone,
He may return again.

‘ The life of man is but a span,
It flourishes like a flower,
We are here to-day and gone to-morrow,
Cut down but in an hour.)

Last.—‘ The moon shines bright and the stars give light
A little before it is day,
So God bless us all, both great and small,
And send you a joyful May.’

(To be continued.)

B. C. C.

SKETCHES FROM HUNGARIAN HISTORY.

BY SELINA GAYE.

XXXII.—THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

A.D. 1516—A.D. 1523.

VLADISLAV's last public act had been of a piece with the rest of his life. He had simply ignored the law of the land by his appointment of the three guardians and three protectors, for of course the Palatine was the only legal regent in the case of a minority, as well as the only person entitled to take charge of the young sovereign. But Perényi was in feeble health and did not feel equal to the task of asserting and making good the right he unquestionably possessed, while Zápolya thought less of maintaining the laws than of playing the part of a second Hunyady and getting himself appointed ‘Governor.’ Nothing could be done, however, until the nation had either sanctioned or annulled the dispositions made by the late King, and the Diet was

accordingly summoned to meet towards the end of April, when 3,000 nobles gathered together on the field of Rákös, demanding the appointment of a Governor and the dismissal of the guardians, one of whom was, as they said, a foreigner, and all of whom were under the influence of foreign princes. By Zápolya's influence, and apparently at his expense, the nobles were kept together, notwithstanding the postponement of the important discussion, until the arrival of the ambassadors from Rome, Vienna, and Poland. The Council of State, which held its meetings with certain of the Magnates apart in the Castle of Buda, then proposed that the government should be carried on by a regency composed of six persons, of whom Zápolya should be one; but this proposition was rejected by the States, and the meeting of the Diet was then transferred to the royal castle, where it was thought the members might be more manageable. The nobles, however, suspected the intention, poured across the Danube, and began to storm the castle on being ordered to lay down their arms before admittance was granted them; nor was it until the commander prepared to call out his garrison and fire upon them that they gave way. The sight of the guns, however, filled them with a sudden panic, and they dispersed in confusion, leaving Zápolya disheartened by the defeat of his plans and somewhat alarmed for his own personal safety, inasmuch as it had reached his ears that the Council had actually discussed the propriety of taking him prisoner. Under these circumstances, and feeling that his sister's death had greatly diminished his chances of support from Poland, he wrote a letter to the King excusing his further attendance at the Diet on the plea of urgent affairs which required his presence in Transylvania, and thereupon he and his 600 horsemen quitted Buda. The guardians breathed more freely when he was gone, and the remaining members of the Diet willingly determined that the country required neither a governor nor foreign tutors. The claims of Maximilian and Sigismund were therefore set aside, the three guardians were confirmed in their powers, the government was committed to the Council of State, Szathmáry was retained as chancellor, and by way of appeasing Zápolya, he was made joint-guardian of the Crown with the Palatine.

Bohemia, on the other hand, accepted the guardianship of Maximilian and Sigismund, and chose to be governed until the King's majority by a Council sitting at Prague.

The result of the Diet was considered to be most satisfactory, but alas! the regency used its power not for the good of the country, but for the furtherance of its own selfish interests. Bakács, who had been empowered by Vladislav to dispose as he would of all his own property, was chiefly concerned with the heaping up of treasure and the adding of one estate to another, in order that his brothers and sisters, who had assumed the name of Erdödy, might take rank with the richest Magnates of the land; Bornemisza, active and energetic as he was, proved either unfaithful or incompetent as steward of the State revenue; and the

Markgraf von Brandenburg, being in the position of most responsibility, did the most mischief of all. To him, foreigner though he was, the education of the young king was almost exclusively entrusted, and he discharged the duty of his office by filling the mind of his pupil with his own love of frivolous pleasures and distaste for all serious occupation. Having squandered the fortune he had acquired by his marriage with the widow of Corvinus, he now continued his extravagance at the expense of the State, and apparently managed to live with much comfort to himself, although the wine drunk at the King's table was often borrowed, and the royal plate was frequently in pawn.

'Although the court is frightfully poor,' writes the Markgraf to a friend in 1518, 'still I have spent a right merry Carnival with the King, just to show the grave lords that we are still alive. First of all, Stibitz and Zetteritz had six encounters on foot; then Krabat and I fought on horseback; Krabat was a demon, I a wild man; the demon tumbled off his horse and fell on his face. The King too rode well' (he was nearly twelve years old), 'and all the ladies of the city were present. Then followed dancing, in which I and eighteen others took part, all of us wearing masks, short cloaks, and red pointed shoes, such as were worn by our ancestors. One old man performed two dances, with a staff in each hand and wooden shoes on his feet.'

Maximilian's ambassador Herberstein also remarks in his diary: 'There was much vain display among the bishops as well as some of the temporal lords, who rode to court with long trains of trumpeters, horses and hussars, while their King was often in want of necessaries;' and he adds with ominous foresight, 'all looked as if things could not last long.'

In point of fact, the regency soon sank into disrepute and even contempt; the evil example set by its members was quickly followed by others, and crimes were suffered to go unpunished, because the Government was conscious of being itself guilty and needing indulgence. The usual consequences followed: the weak were oppressed, the State was robbed, the laws were set at nought, money was recklessly squandered, and the general misery resulting from this state of things foreshadowed but too plainly the ruin which was at hand.

Meanwhile Leo X., animated by his classical tastes, his loving admiration of ancient Greece, and his anxiety for the safety of Italy, was doing his best to rouse Europe to war with the Turks, and had received an enthusiastic reply to his appeal from Maximilian, who urged him to gird on his sword and stand forth himself at the head of the Christian legions. Early in 1518 a Cardinal arrived in Buda from Rome, bringing a plan of the campaign, which was magnificent but on too extensive a scale to be very practicable. After two fruitless discussions touching its feasibility, the Council summoned the Diet to its assistance, and sent a special invitation to Zápolya, coupled with an injunction to him not to bring his usual armed host to intimidate his opponents, but to come with a moderate retinue and an honest desire to serve the fatherland. Zápolya

replied by desiring the dismissal of Bornemisza from the command of the Castle of Buda, in order that he too might have free access to the King, and, on his request being complied with, he made his appearance attended by 200 mounted followers, meaning as was well known to get himself made Governor if possible.

The first subject brought before the States was the pressing need of money, but the nobles declared that it was useless to impose more taxes upon the oppressed and exhausted peasantry; and they turned round upon the regency, reproaching it angrily for its bad management of the finances, and plainly intimating the need of a Governor. Stormy discussions ensued, and the Magnates, most of whom held with the Council, foolishly threatened to invoke the aid of an Imperial army to reduce the nobles to obedience; a threat which only excited intense and just indignation, and determined the States at once to quit Buda, where they could no longer exercise their right of free deliberation. Thirty Magnates and thirteen ecclesiastics were left to carry on the discussions in the capital, and they decided to call out the banderia and levy the deprecated tax, but found themselves powerless to enforce their resolutions, which were simply ignored.

Meanwhile the nobles re-assembled at Tolna to continue their deliberations, which were led by Verböczy, and breathed something of the old passionate zeal and enthusiasm for the well-being of the fatherland. A rendezvous at Bács was appointed for Michaelmas Day, and not only were the banderia ordered to attend, but also all the nobles in person, as well as one peasant, properly equipped, for every twenty households. A moderate tax was imposed, and an oath was taken of the treasurer that he would deal faithfully with the money, and see to its being duly collected by his subordinates in the different counties. He was also to give a strict account of his stewardship to the Diet, which was to meet again at Bács to take measures for the administration of the royal revenue and the relief of the peasantry. The King, or rather the regency, acquiesced in these resolutions, and by desire of the Diet, messengers were despatched to the Pope, the Emperor, Venice, and the King of Poland, to ask for help against the Turks; but, when it came to the point, most of the Bishops and Magnates chose to consider that they owed no obedience to the one-sided decrees of the nobility, and they neither came to Bács themselves, nor sent their banderia. The King and the regency too held aloof, notwithstanding the sanction they had given to the measures adopted.

Zápolya, indeed, put in an appearance, having become aware that his popularity had suffered by his absence from Tolna; but, considering the scornful disregard with which their orders were treated, the nobles thought it best to make no mention of the campaign so lately agreed upon. Instead, they proceeded to inflict fines on the absentees and to institute a vigorous reform of the finances, at the same time enforcing the laws of 1514 with respect to the restitution of all the mortgaged crownlands, and entrusting the two newly-appointed treasurers with almost unlimited

powers of compulsion. Finally, to the great displeasure of the Magnates, the Council of Regency was tripled by the addition of sixteen members, drawn from the ranks of the nobility, who at once set energetically to work to carry out the resolutions passed at Bács. No one ventured any open opposition, and it seems that most of the King's mortgaged property was actually restored, but whether the taxes voted for war expenses and the payment of the King's debts were really levied, and whether the money was better managed than before, does not appear.

Be this as it may, the new regency was but short-lived, for the Magnates soon found means to rid themselves of the obnoxious members, through the instrumentality of Zápolya himself, who was won over by an intimation that the court party wished to make him Palatine in the room of the lately deceased Perényi, and would do so on condition of his lending his powerful help for the removal of the nobles. In reality Zápolya's election was the one thing the court dreaded and wished to prevent; but this he did not see until, after the dismissal of the sixteen (chiefly, be it observed, his own adherents), he found to his wrath and mortification that he had unwittingly defeated his own ends, and that Báthory was preferred to the vacant office. In vain he remonstrated, and appealed to the alliance concluded at Temesvár, when he had saved his rival from destruction, and again to the recent arrangements made with him and Szathmáry. The only answer he received was that 'Báthory had not sought the post, but having been elected, he must accept it out of regard for the welfare of the fatherland.'

Humbled and angry, Zápolya quitted Buda, and Báthory's election was confirmed by the nobles. Henceforth the two rivals were deadly foes, and contributed by their enmity not a little to the ruin of their country.

Meanwhile the Pope's magnificent campaign had been utterly abandoned; and when the death of Maximilian, early in 1519, deprived Hungary of any further prospect of assistance from Germany, she concluded a truce with the Turks for three years, on conditions which were humiliating enough, inasmuch as she was pledged to allow free passage through her territories to the Sultan's troops, unless the other provinces of Europe chose to join in the truce within a twelvemonth.

Yet, notwithstanding dangers from without and troubles within, enough to tax all the energies and resources of a strong government, the Hungarian regency was so blind in its folly as eventually to put forward the claims of Lajos to the vacant Imperial throne, on the ground that he had been adopted by Maximilian, and by him nominated King of the Romans. When two such candidates as King Karl of Spain, and François of France were in the field, it was only to be expected that the pretensions of so feeble a prince as Lajos should be looked upon with coldness verging on contempt; and Verböczy, who had been charged to obtain the support of Rome and Venice, could hardly have been surprised to find his mission fruitless. It was of far more serious consequence that he failed also in the primary object of his journey,

which had been to obtain help against the Turks, who were perpetually harassing the frontiers. The treasury was empty; the King reduced to the utmost poverty; and, in the consciousness of their inability to deal with the difficulties of their position, the Council of State seriously proposed to offer the regency to King Sigismund of Poland. Well would it have been for Hungary had he accepted the charge; but unfortunately he was just now completely occupied by a war with the Grand Master Albrecht von Brandenburg, and had no energies or interest to spare for his neighbours. This resource failing, the next anxiety was to secure a powerful ally by the marriage of the Princess Anna, and plenipotentiaries were sent to Aachen to discuss the fulfilment of the treaties concluded with Maximilian. They arrived in time to be present at the coronation of the Emperor-elect; but Karl, who had been urged to marry the Princess himself, after taking a twelvemonth to consider the matter, ended by resigning her and the Austrian States together to his brother Ferdinand.

Lajos, whose marriage with the Archduchess Maria was postponed for a time, was now in his fifteenth year, old in appearance, but a perfect child in mind and will, untrained and undisciplined, and accustomed to the thoughtless gratification of every passing fancy. One such fancy will serve as a sample. For two years the wealthy bishopric of Eger had been vacant, and its large revenues had, as was usual in such cases, been paid into the royal treasury; but there was a deficit of 40,000 golden florins, a large sum of money, especially in the impoverished state of the royal exchequer. There was no doubt as to the defaulter, but the man, luckily for himself, possessed a very clever trained falcon, which Lajos happened to see and admire. What was the price asked for it? Only the remission of the debt due to the treasury; and Lajos speedily became the owner of the bird on these terms. Alas! the falcon cost not only the gold of the treasury, but the blood of the nation; and there was no one to stay the young king's hand.

Meanwhile, Hungary was carelessly rejoicing over the death of the Sultan Szelim. While engaged in a war with Persia, Szelim had made a solemn vow to Allah, that, if He granted success to his arms, he would build Him three temples; one in Jerusalem, another in Buda, and a third in Rome. The Christian world had heard of this vow with a shudder, and Buda had trembled at Szelim's victories; but now he was dead, and he had not performed his terrible vow, so the city rejoiced and made merry. But her joy was of short duration, for Szelim was succeeded by his son Soliman—a name of terrible import to the Magyar—called by Turks, 'the Law-giver;' by Christians, 'the Great' and the 'Magnificent.'

One of his first acts, on coming to the throne, was to despatch an ambassador to Hungary to demand tribute or declare war if it was refused; and, to give additional weight to his words, he at the same

time ordered the Pasha of the adjoining province to lay siege to Jaicza. Now, the border warfare between the Pashas and the commanders of the Hungarian frontier fortresses never ceased, nor was it held to be any infringement of the truce; but the authorized attack on Jaicza was quite another matter, and utterly unjustifiable, while the demand for tribute was an insult such as no free people could patiently accept. No wonder, therefore, that great indignation was felt and expressed by the Council of State; but unfortunately prudence was entirely swallowed up in anger, and, imitating the way in which the Sultans were wont to treat the bearers of evil tidings, they kept Behram Tschausch a prisoner—an act of madness, which, in the feeble state of the government, and the distracted condition of the country, could have no other result than to bring on the war before there was time to arm. Moreover, never was there less chance than at this crisis of Hungary's obtaining foreign help; for, when Verböczy made his appearance at the Diet of Worms (1521), and described at length the danger which threatened not only his own land but the whole of Christendom, and especially Germany, he found that his words made little impression amid the excitement occasioned by the appearance of the now famous Luther.

Sigismund of Poland was too prudent to involve himself in hostilities with so powerful a foe as Soliman; Venice was of the same mind; the Pope could give nothing but promises; the Emperor was hindered by insurrections in Spain, and the struggle already begun with his rival François; and François, if he was not maligned, was already secretly meditating a league with the Sultan.

Hungary must stand or fall alone, and, with this certainty before them, the Council of State met on the 24th of April to take measures for the defence of Szabács and Belgrade, the two chief bulwarks of the country. However, the Bans of Belgrade refused to resign the fortress unless the money they had paid to the garrison were refunded, nor would they allow Báthory András, who had been chosen commander, to bring in a reinforcement. 'There were plenty of men,' said they, 'if they were properly furnished with money, provisions, arms, and gunpowder;' and finding that the Government neither could nor would meet their demands for payment, they withdrew, without resigning their offices, and the defence of these two important places was left to their subordinates. Incredible as it must seem, the Council separated without taking any resolution or doing anything [towards the protection of the fatherland. Indeed, some of its members were speedily occupied in far other and more interesting matters, their own personal pleasure and aggrandizement. The death of Cardinal Bakács, which occurred soon after, caused some excitement among the ecclesiastics, and Szathmáry, the influential Bishop of Pécs, was completely absorbed] in securing the archbishopric for himself; while Szalkay, the Chancellor, was equally anxious to obtain the wealthy See of Eger; and Báthory, the Palatine, in spite of his lameness, was celebrating with great pomp his marriage with the daughter of the Prince of Massowien. Then,

too, the royal bride, the Archduchess Maria, arrived from Vienna, and although the wedding was postponed to more peaceful times, Buda rejoiced and held many a festival in her honour. Altogether there was so much of pleasure and excitement to occupy men's minds, that distasteful subjects were thrust out of sight, and people forgot because they did not see that the defences of the country were falling one by one, and that thousands were being daily slain or dragged away into slavery. Meanwhile Soliman, enraged at the detention of his ambassador, had sworn to fulfil his father's vow and lead an army against Hungary in person; nor was he long in carrying out his resolution. The news of his sudden advance came like a thunderclap upon the gay capital, and roused the Government into something a little more like activity.

There was a hurried sitting of the Diet, the Magnates and the counties were ordered to send their banderia to Tolna, and the regency was empowered to mortgage certain royal rents to raise troops for the King. Lajos himself addressed an appeal to the Pope, the Emperor, and the other Christian powers, imploring speedy help; but it was all too late. There was no time even for the empty promises which the princes of Europe were generally so ready to give; and the 30,000 ducats sent by Venice, Ferdinand's auxiliaries, and a few Silesian troops, did not arrive till the blow had fallen. By the time a few thousand Hungarians had assembled in the camp at Tolna, and before the King had even quitted Buda, news came of the fall of Szabács and the siege of Belgrade.

The gallant Logody was in command of Szabács when Achmet Pasha appeared before it at the head of 20,000 men. The garrison consisted of 200 soldiers, though in former times 4,000 Janissaries had not been considered too many to defend the citadel against Mátyás. Guns, ammunition, and provisions were all wanting, and relief was hopeless, but Logody took an oath of his men that they would hold out to their last breath, and gloriously they kept their word. The walls crumbled beneath the assault, the moats were filled, the outworks were occupied by the enemy, and still the sixty men who survived did not dream of surrender. It would have been easy for them to cross the Danube and escape, but they chose to remain true to their trust and abide the last attack, nor was it until seven hundred of the enemy had perished by their hands that they were at length overpowered and hewn down. The capture of the two great fortresses, the keys of Hungary, satisfied Soliman for the present, and he returned to Constantinople, while the Magnates gathered in consternation around the King, who was detained by illness at Mohács. Even he, frivolous as he was, seems to have felt keenly the loss of the 'most precious pearls in his crown,' which had been associated for centuries with the most heroic names and the most glorious periods of the nation's history, and in the vehemence of his regret he heaped reproaches on Bornemisza, Szalkay, and Szathmáry for their obstinacy in opposing the election of a Governor who might have defended the kingdom. To words he added blows, if Szerémi is to be believed, telling them to their faces that they

had brought him up in such a way that he felt incompetent to rule and ignorant of the art of war.

Towards the end of November the Diet met in Buda, and feeling that the loss of the fortress had put the whole country at the mercy of the foe, the States set vigorously to work to impose extraordinary taxes for the raising of a defence fund. The danger was so patent and imminent, that they waived their own privilege of exemption, and imposed the taxes equally on all classes. Wine and beer, horses, oxen, sheep, goats, pigs, and even bee-hives were to be taxed ; nor were the merchants' wares, the pedlar's pack, or the fisherman's net allowed to escape. The royal revenue was to be paid in full, mortgages were to be annulled, and the King was to be furnished with the means of living in a manner suitable to his rank, so that, if possible, the prestige of the crown might be restored.

The zeal displayed by the States is no doubt attributable to the eloquence of Verböczy, but the lawyer was no practical statesman, and it was hardly possible to execute some of the resolutions ; so that when the excitement subsided, matters went on pretty much as before. The nobles and clergy shirked payment of the taxes, those who could not shirk altogether paid as little as they could ; the collector Szerenesés, a converted Jew, was thoroughly dishonest ; and the ultimate result was that no more than 45,747 ducats ever found their way into the war-chest ; though, had the money voted been really raised and properly dealt with, there would have been more than sufficient for the maintenance of a large army.

In December the King, now sixteen years old, was declared to have attained his majority ; and early in the new year he was married to the Austrian Archduchess, who was a twelvemonth older than himself, and greatly his superior in character and intellect.

Meanwhile, though he was just now occupied with preparations for the capture of Rhodes, Soliman continued his hostilities against Hungary, and evidently intended to reduce her to the condition of a Turkish province. One place on her frontiers was lost after another, and day by day the danger of her position was increased ; yet still Zápolya could not lay aside his jealousy and his ambition, nor could the various parties in the State forget their differences ; and still, the more distracted the country was, the more urgently did she invoke foreign aid. The Nürnberg Diet indeed ordered prayers to be offered throughout Germany for deliverance from the Turks, but showed little disposition to put its own shoulder to the wheel, and beyond making a few promises, which were never fulfilled, it took no further notice of the appeal for help.

By the end of the year (1522) Rhodes had fallen, after a long and gallant resistance, and now Hungary might expect that Soliman would speedily turn his attention to herself. When, therefore, the Diet met in the spring, a strict account was demanded of those who had been entrusted with the collection and management of the war-taxes, and then it appeared that only twenty-six of the counties had paid at all, and

that but partially; while of the Magnates, all had evaded payment but Zápolya and Istvánffy. Corruption and dishonesty seemed to be rife in every department of the State, from the highest to the lowest; and such serious accusations were made against the Palatine by Zápolya, whose own hands were clean, that the King was obliged to dismiss him from his office. More taxes were voted with unusual liberality but questionable sincerity, and the States determined to fill up the See of Kalócsa, which, owing to its comparative poverty, had been suffered to remain vacant for three years. As the diocese contained the districts most threatened by the Turks, the Bishop was required to be an experienced soldier, and the choice of the Diet fell on Tomory Pál, who, though a monk, had formerly distinguished himself as a brave leader. Nothing but the command of the Pope would induce him to exchange his cell for the Archbishopric; but when he did at length accept it, and was also appointed Captain-General of Lower Hungary, with unlimited powers, he applied himself zealously to the discharge of his duties, gathered around him a band of tried warriors, put all the strongholds in a state of defence, as far as his means would allow, and strenuously exerted himself to bring something like order and discipline into the distracted district over which his sway extended.

THE THREE BRIDES.

BY CHARLOTTE M. YONGE.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE MONSTROUS REGIMENT OF WOMEN.

Descend, my muse!

RAYMOND had been invited by one of his fellow-guests to make a visit at his house, and this was backed up on the morning after his return by a letter containing a full invitation to both himself and his wife. He never liked what he called 'doing nothing in other people's houses,' but he thought any sacrifice needful that might break up Cecil's present intimacies, and change the current of ideas; and his mother fully agreed in thinking that it would be well to begin a round of visits, to last until the Session of Parliament should have begun. By the time it was over, Julius and Rosamond would be in their own house, and it might be easier to make a new beginning.

The friends whom he could reckon on as sure to welcome him and his bride were political acquaintances of mark, far above the Dunstone range, and Cecil could not but be gratified, even while Mrs. Duncombe and her friend declared that they were going to try to demoralize her by the seductions of the aristocracy.

After all, Cecil was too much of an ingrain Charnock to be very deeply imbued with Women's Rights. All that she wanted was her own way, and opposition. Lady Tyrrell had fascinated her and secured her affection,

and she followed her lead, which was rather that of calm curiosity and desire to hear the subject ventilated than actual partizanship, for which her ladyship was far too 'clever, as well as too secure in her natural supremacy. They had only seemed on that side because other people were so utterly alien to it, and because of their friendship with the really zealous Mrs. Duncombe.

The sanitary cause which had become mixed with it was, however, brought strongly before their minds by Mrs. Tallboys' final lecture, at which she impressed on the ladies' minds with great vehemence that here they might lead the way. If men would not act as a body, the ladies should set the example, and shame them, by each doing her very utmost in the cleansing of the nests of disease that reeked in the worn-out civilization of the cities of the old country. The ladies listened. Lady Tyrrell, with a certain interest in such an eager flow of eloquence; Eleonora, with thoughts far away. Bessie Duncombe expressed a bold practical determination to get one fragment, at least, of the work done, since she knew Pettitt, the hairdresser, was public-spirited enough to allow her to carry out her ideas on his property, and Cecil, with her ample allowance, as yet uncalled for, in the abundance of her trousseau, promised to supply what the hairdresser could not advance, as a tangible proof of her sincerity.

She held a little council with Mrs. Duncombe at the working society, when she resigned her day into that lady's hands on going away. 'I shall ask Mrs. Miles Charnock,' said that lady. 'You don't object?'

'Oh no, only don't ask [her till I'm gone, and you know she will only come on condition of being allowed to expound.'

'We must have somebody, and now the thing has gone on so long, and will end in three months, the goody element will not do much harm, and, unluckily, most women will not act without it.'

'You have been trying to train Miss Moy.'

'I shall try still, but I can't get her to take interest in anything but the boisterous side of emancipation.'

'I can't bear the girl,' said Cecil; 'I am sure she comes only for the sake of the horses.'

'I'm afraid so; but she amuses Bob, and there's always a hope of moving her father through her, though she declares that the Three Pigeons is his tenderest point, and that he had as soon meddle with it as with the apple of his eye. I suppose he gets a great rent from that Gadley.'

'Do you really think you shall do anything with her?' said Cecil, who might uphold her at home, but whose taste was outraged by her.

'I hope so! At any rate, she is not conventional. Why, when I was set free from my school at Paris, and married Bob three months later, I hadn't three ideas in my head beyond horses and balls and soldiers. It has all come with life and reading, my dear.'

And a very odd 'all' it was, so far; but there was this difference between Bessie Duncombe and Cecil Charnock Poyndsett, that the

'gospel of progress' was to the one the first she had ever really known, and became a reaching forward to a newly-perceived standard of benevolence and nobleness: to the other it was simply retrograding, and that less from conviction than from the spirit of rivalry and opposition.

Lady Tyrrell with her father and sister were likewise going to leave home, to stay among friends with whom Sir Harry could hunt until the London campaign, when Eleonora was to see the world. Thus the bazaar was postponed until the return of the ladies in the summer, when the preparations would be more complete and the season more suitable. The church must wait for it, for nothing like a sufficient amount of subscription had been as yet promised.

There was still, however, to come that select dinner-party at Mrs. Duncombe's, to which Julius, moved by her zeal and honesty, as well as by curiosity, had promised his presence with Rosamond, 'at his peril,' as she said.

They were kept so long at the door of Ancuba Villa that they had begun to doubt if they had not mistaken the day, until the Sirenwood carriage crashed up behind them; and after the third pull at the bell they were admitted by an erect, alert figure,—a remnant of Captain Duncombe's military life.

He marshalled them into the drawing-room, where by dim firelight they could just discern the Professor and a certain good-natured horsey friend of the Captain's, who sprang up from easy-chairs on the opposite sides of the fire to greet them, while the man hastily stirred up the fire, lighted the gas, dashed at the table, shutting up an open blotting-book that lay on it, closing an ink-bottle, and gathering up some torn fragments of paper, which he would have thrown into the scrap-basket but that it was full of little books on the hundred ways of dressing a pumpkin. Then he gave a wistful look at the *ami de la maison*, as if commending the guests to him, and receiving a nod in return, retired.

'I fear we are too early,' said Lady Tyrrell.

'Fact is,' said the familiar, whose name Julius was trying to remember, 'there's been a catastrophe; cook forgot to order the turkey, went to bed last night in hysterics, and blew out the gas instead of turning it off. No, no'—as the guests, expecting fatal consequences, looked as if they thought they had better remove themselves: 'she came round, and Duncombe has driven over to Backsworth to bring home the dinner. He'll soon be back.'

This not appearing greatly to reassure the visitors, the Professor added, 'No, no, ladies. Mrs. Duncombe charged me to say that she will be perfectly fixed in a short time, and I flatter myself that my wife is equal to any emergency.'

'It is very kind in her,' said Lady Tyrrell.

'I confess,' said Professor Tallboys, 'that I am not sorry that such an occasion should occur of showing an American lady's domestic powers. I flatter myself they do not discredit her cause.'

Just then were heard the wheels of the drag, and in rushed one of the boys, grasping Eleonora's skirts, and proclaiming, 'We've got the grub! Oysters and a pie! Oh my!'

'Satisfactory!' said the friend. 'But let go, Ducky, you are rumpling Miss Vivian.'

'She's coming to see the quarion! You promised, Lena! Here's a jolly crab! He'll pinch!'

There was a small conservatory or glazed niche on one side of the room, into which the boy dragged Lenore, and Julius followed, dimly sensible of what the quarion might be, and hoping for a word with the young lady, while he trusted to his wife to occupy her sister.

The place contained two desolate camellias, with leaves in the same proportion as those on trees in the earlier ages of illumination, and one scraggy, leafless geranium, besides a green and stagnant tank, where a goldfish moved about, flapping and gasping, as the boy disturbed it in his search for the crab. He absorbed all the conversation, so that Julius could only look back into the room, where an attempt at artistic effect was still dimly visible through accumulated litter. The Venus of Milo stood on a bracket, with a riding-whip in her arms, and a bundle of working society tickets behind her, and her *vis-à-vis*, the Faun of Praxiteles, was capped by a glove with one finger pointing upwards, and had a ball of worsted tangled about his legs; but further observation was hindered by the man-servant's voice at the outer door, 'Master Ducky, where are you? Your Ma says you are to go to bed directly.'

'No, no, I'll put myself to bed!'

'Come, sir, please do, like a good boy—Master Pinney won't go without you, and I must put him to bed while they are dishing up. Come, sir, I've got a mince pie for you.'

'And some oysters—Bobby said I should have some oysters!'

'Yes, yes, come along, sir.'

And master Ducky submitted to his fate, while Julius looked his wonder, and asked 'Is he nursery-maid?'

'Just now, since the *bonne* went,' said Lenore. 'He is a most faithful attached servant, who will do anything for them. *She* does attach people deeply when the first shock is over.'

'I am coming to believe so,' he answered. 'There seems to me to be excellent elements.'

'I am so glad!' said Lenore; 'she is so thorough, so true and frank; and much of this oddness is really an inconsistent struggle to keep out of debt.'

'Well! at any rate I am thankful to her for this opportunity of seeing you,' said Julius. 'We have both been longing to speak our welcome to you.'

'Thank you. It is so kind,' she fervently whispered; 'all the kinder for the state of things that is insisted on—though you know that it can make no real difference,' she added, apparently addressing the goldfish.

‘Frank knows it,’ said Julius, in a low voice.

‘I trust he does, though I cannot see him to assure him—you will?’ she added, looking up at him with a shy brightness in her eye and a flush on her cheek.

‘Yes, indeed!’ he said, laying his hand on hers for a moment. ‘I fear you may both have much to pull through, but I think you are of a steadfast nature.’

‘I hope so, I think I am, for none of my feelings seem to me ever to change, except that I get harder, and I am afraid, bitterer.’

‘I can understand your feeling that form of trial.’

‘Oh, if you could, and would help me!’

‘As a brother; if I may.’

Again she laid a hand on his, saying, ‘I have longed to talk openly to you ever since we met in the cow-shed; but I could not make any advance to any of you, because,’ she whispered in haste, ‘I thought it my duty to hold back from Frank. And now, till we go away, Camilla watches me and occupies me every minute, will not even let me ride out with Papa. I wonder she lets me talk to you now.’

‘We know each other,’ said Julius shortly.

It was so. Once, in the plain-spoken days of childhood, Miles and Julius had detected Camilla Vivian in some flagrant cheating at a game, and had roundly expressed their opinion. In the subsequent period of Raymond’s courtship, Miles had succumbed to the fascination, but Julius had given one such foil, that she had never again attempted to cajole him.

‘I have seen that you did from the first,’ said Lenore. ‘And it would make it much easier to talk to you than to any outsider, who would never understand, even if it were possible for me to explain, how hard it is to see which way my duty lies—especially filial.’

‘Do you mean in general, or in this special matter?’

‘Both. You see, in her hands he is so different from what he was before she came home, that I don’t feel as if I was obeying him—only her; and I don’t think I am bound to do that. Not in the great matter, I am clear. Nobody can meddle with my real sincere pledge of myself to Frank, nobody!’ she spoke as if there was iron in her lips. ‘But as far as overt acts go, they have a right to forbid me, till I am of age at least, and we must bear it.’

‘Yes, you are right there.’

‘But there are thousands of other little cases of right and wrong, and altogether I have come to such a spirit of opposition that I find it easier to resist than to do anything with a good grace.’

‘You cannot always tell when resistance is principle, and when temper or distaste.’

‘There’s distaste enough always,’ said poor Lenore.

‘To gaieties?’ he said, amazed as one habituated to his wife’s ravenous appetite for any sort of society or amusement.

‘Of course,’ she answered sadly. ‘A great deal of trouble just for a

little empty babble. Often not one word worth remembering, and a general sense of having been full of bad feelings.'

'No enjoyment?' he asked in surprise.

'Only by the merest chance and exception,' she answered, surprised at his surprise; 'what is there to enjoy?'

The peculiar-looking clergyman might have seemed more likely to ask such a question than the beautiful girl, but he looked at her anxiously and said, 'Don't nourish morbid dislike and contempt, my dear Lena, it is not a safeguard. There are such things as perilous reactions. Try to weigh justly, and be grateful for kindness, and to like what is likeable.'

At that moment, after what had been an interval of weary famine to all but these two, host and hostess appeared, the lady as usual, picturesque, though in the old black silk, with a Roman sash tied transversely, and holly in her hair; and gaily shaking hands—'That's right, Lady Rosamond, so you are trusted here! Your husband hasn't sent you to represent him?'

'I'm afraid his confidence in me did not go so far,' said Rosamond.

'Ah! I see—Lady Tyrrell, how d'ye do—you've brought Lena? Well, Rector, are you prepared?'

'That depends on what you expect of me.'

'Have you the convinceable spot in your mind?'

'We must find it. It is very uncommon, and indurates very soon, so we had better make the most of our opportunity,' said the American lady, who had entered as resplendent as before, though in so different a style that Rosamond wondered how such a wardrobe could be carried about the world; and the sporting friend muttered 'Stunning! she has been making kickshaws all day, and looks as if she came out of a bandbox! If all women were like that, it might pay.'

It was true. Mrs. Tallboys was one of those women of resource whose practical powers may inspire the sense of superiority, and with the ease and confidence of her country.

The meal was a real success. That some portion had been procured, ready dressed, at Backsworth, was evident, but all that had been done at home had a certain piquant Transatlantic flavour, in which the American Muse could be detected; and both she and her husband were polished, lively, and very agreeable, in spite of the twang in their voices. Miss Moy, the Captain, and his friend, talked horses at one end of the table, and Rosamond faltered her woman's horror for the rights of her sex, increased by this supposed instance.

When the ladies rose at dessert, Mrs. Duncombe summoned him, 'Come, Rector! come Professor! you're not to sit over your wine.'

'We rise so far above the ordinary level of manhood!' said Julius, obediently rising.

'Once for all, Mr. Charnock,' said Mrs. Duncombe, turning on him with flashing eyes, and her Elizabethan majesty, 'if you come prepared to scoff, we can have nothing to do with you.'

Rosamond's eyes looked mischievous, and her brow cocked, but Julius

answered in earnest, 'Really, I assure you I have not come in a spirit of sarcasm; I am honestly desirous of hearing your arguments.'

'Shall I stay in your stead?' added Miss Moy, 'they'll be much more amusing here!'

'Come, Gussie, you're on your good behaviour,' said Mrs. Duncombe. 'Bob kept you to learn the right way of making a sensation.'

As they entered the drawing-room two more guests arrived, namely, Joanna Bawater, and Herbert, who walked in with a kind of grim submission, till he saw Lady Tyrrell, when he lighted up, and, on a little gracious gesture with her hand, he sat down on the sofa beside her; and was there solaced by an occasional remark in an undertone; for indeed the boy was always in a trance wherever she was, and she had a fair amount of by-play wherewith to entertain herself and him during the discussion.

'You are just in time, Jenny,' said Rosamond, 'the great question is going to be started.'

'And it is?'

'The Equality of the Sexes,' pronounced Mrs. Duncombe.

'*Ex cathedra?*' said Julius, as the graceful Muse seated herself in a large red arm-chair. 'This scene is not an easy one in which to dispute it.'

'You see, Bessie,' said Mrs. Tallboys, 'that men are so much afraid of the discussion that they try to elude it with empty compliment, under which is couched a covert sneer.'

'Perhaps,' returned Julius, 'we might complain that we can't open our lips without compliments and sneers being detected when we were innocent of both.'

'Were you?' demanded Mrs. Tallboys.

'Honestly, I was looking round and thinking the specimens before us would tell in your favour.'

'What a gallant Parson!' cried Miss Moy.

But a perfect clamour broke out from others.

'Julius, that's too bad! when you know——'

'Mr. Charnock, you are quite mistaken. Bob is much cleverer than I, in his own line——'

'Quite true, Rector,' affirmed Herbert; 'Joan has more brains than all the rest of us, for a woman I mean.'

'For a woman!' repeated Mrs. Tallboys. 'Let a human being do or be what she will, it is disposed of in a moment by that one verdict, "Very well for a woman!"'

'How is it with the decision of posterity?' said Jenny. 'Can you show any work of woman of equal honour and permanence with that of men?'

'Because her training has been sedulously inferior.'

'Not always,' said Jenny, 'not in Italy in the cinque cento, nor in England under Elizabeth.'

'Yes, and there were names!'

‘Names, yes, but that is all. The lady’s name is remembered for the curiosity of her having equalled the ordinary poet or artist of her time, but her performances either are lost or only known to curious scholars. They have not the quality which makes things permanent.’

‘What do you say to Sappho?’

‘There is nothing of her but a name, and fragments that curious scholars read.’

‘Worse luck to her if she invented Sapphics,’ added Herbert.

‘One of womankind’s torments for mankind, eh!’ said his neighbour.

‘And there are plenty more such,’ asserted Mrs. Duncombe boldly (for these were asides). ‘It is only that one can’t recollect—and the men have suppressed them.’

‘I think men praised them,’ said Jenny, ‘and that we remember the praise, not the works. For instance, Roswitha, or Olympia Morata, or Vittoria Colonna. Vittoria’s sonnets are extant, but we only value them as being hers, more for what she *was* than for their intrinsic merit.’

‘And,’ added Eleonora, ‘men did not suppress Hannah More, or Joanna Baillie. You know Scott thought Miss Baillie’s dramas would rank with Shakespeare.’

Mrs. Tallboys was better read in logic and mathematics than in history, and did not follow Jenny, but she turned her adversary’s argument to her own advantage, by exclaiming, ‘Are the gentlemen present familiar with these bright lights?’

‘I confess my ignorance of some of them,’ said Julius.

‘But my youngest brother knows all that!’ said Rosamond, at a brave venture.

‘Macaulay’s schoolboy,’ murmured Lady Tyrrell softly.

‘Let us return to the main point,’ said Mrs. Tallboys, a little annoyed. ‘It is of the present and future that I would speak, not of the past.’

‘Does not the past give the only data on which to form a conclusion?’ said Julius.

‘Certainly not. The proposition is not what a woman or two in her down-trodden state may have exceptionally effected, but her natural equality, and in fact superiority, in all but the physical strength which has imposed an unjust bondage on the higher nature.’

‘I hardly know where to meet you if you reject all arguments from proved facts,’ said Julius.

‘And the Bible. Why don’t you say the Bible,’ exclaimed his wife in an undertone; but Mrs. Tallboys took it up and said, ‘The precepts of Scripture are founded on a state of society passed away. You may find arguments for slavery there.’

‘I doubt that,’ said Julius. ‘There are practical directions for an existing state of things, which have been distorted into sanction for its continuance. The actual precepts are broad principles, which are for all times, and apply to the hired servant as well as to the slave. So again with the relations of man and wife; I can nowhere find a command so

adapted to the seclusion and depression of the Eastern woman as to be inapplicable to the Christian matron. And the typical virtuous woman, the valiant woman, is one of the noblest figures anywhere depicted.'

'I know,' said Mrs. Tallboys, who had evidently been waiting impatiently again to declaim, 'that men, even ministers of religion, from Paul if you like downwards, have been willing enough to exalt woman so long as they claim to sit above her. The higher the oppressed, so much higher the self-exaltation of the oppressor. Paul and Peter exalt their virtuous woman, but only as their own appendage, adorning themselves; and while society with religious ministers at the head of it call on woman to submit, and degrade the sex, we shall continue to hear of such disgraces to England as I see in your police reports—brutal mechanics beating their wives.'

'I fear while physical force is on the side of the brute,' said Julius, 'no abstract recognition of equality would save her.'

'Society would take up her cause, and protect her.'

'So it is willing to do now, if she asks for protection.'

'Yes,' broke in Rosamond, 'but nothing would induce a woman worth sixpence to take the law against her husband.'

'There I think Lady Rosamond has at once demonstrated the higher nature of the woman,' said Mrs. Tallboys. 'What man would be capable of such generosity?'

'No one denies,' said Julius, 'that generous forbearance, patience, fortitude, and self-renunciation, belong almost naturally to the true wife and mother, and are her great glory; but would she not be stripped of them by self-assertion as the peer in power?'

'Turning our flank again with a compliment,' said Mrs. Duncombe. 'These fine qualities are very convenient to yourselves, and so you praise them up.'

'Not so!' returned Julius, 'because they are really the higher virtues.'

'Patience!' at once exclaimed the American and English emancipators with some scorn.

'Yes,' said Julius, in a low tone of thorough earnest. 'The patience of strength and love is the culmination of virtue.'

Jenny knew what was in his mind, but Mrs. Tallboys, with a curious tone, half pique, half triumph, said, 'You acknowledge this which you call the higher nature in woman—that is to say, all the passive qualities—and you are willing to allow her a finer spiritual essence, and yet you do not agree to her equal rights. This is the injustice of the prejudice which has depressed her all these centuries.'

'Stay,' broke in Jenny, evidently not to the lady's satisfaction. 'That does not state the question. Nobody denies that woman is often of a higher and finer essence, as you say, than man, and has some noble qualities in a higher degree than any but the most perfect men; but that is not the question. It is whether she have more force and capacity than man, is in fact actually able to be on an equality.'

‘And, I say,’ returned Mrs. Tallboys, ‘that man has used brute force to cramp woman’s intellect and energy so long, that she has learnt to acquiesce in her position, and to abstain from exerting herself, so that it is only where she is partially emancipated, as in my own country, that any idea of her powers can be gained.’

‘I am afraid,’ said Julius, ‘that more may be lost to the world than is gained! No; I am not speaking from the tyrant point of view. I am thinking whether free friction with the world may not lessen that sweetness and tender innocence and purity that make a man’s home an ideal and a sanctuary—his best earthly influence.’

‘This is only sentiment. Innocence is worthless if it cannot stand alone and protect itself!’ said Mrs. Tallboys.

‘I do not mean innocence unable to stand alone. It should be strong and trustworthy, but should have the bloom on it still, not rubbed off by contact or knowledge of evil. Desire of shielding that bloom from the slightest breath of contamination is no small motive for self-restraint, and therefore a great preservative to most men.’

‘Women purify the atmosphere wherever they go,’ said the lady.

‘Many women do,’ returned Julius; ‘but will they retain that power universally if they succeed in obtaining a position where there will be less consideration for them, and they must be exposed to a certain hardening and roughening process?’

‘If so,’ exclaimed Mrs. Tallboys, ‘if men are so base, we would soon assert ourselves. We are no frail morning glories for you to guard and worship with restraint, lest forsooth your natural breath should wither us away.’

As she spoke the door opened, and, with a strong reek of tobacco, in came the two other gentlemen. ‘Well, Rector, have you given in?’ asked the Captain. ‘Is Lady Rosamond to mount the pulpit henceforth?’

‘Ah! wouldn’t I preach you a sermon?’ returned Rosamond.

‘To resume,’ said Mrs. Tallboys, sitting very upright. ‘You still go on the old assumption that woman was made for you. It is all the same story: one man says she is for his pleasure, another for his servant, and you, for—for his refinement. You would all have us adjectives. Now I defy you to prove that woman is not a substantive, created for herself.’

‘If you said “growed,” Mrs. Tallboys, it would be more consistent,’ said Jenny. ‘Her creation and her purpose in the world stand upon precisely the same authority.’

‘I wonder at you, Miss Bowater,’ said Mrs. Tallboys. ‘I cannot understand a woman trying to depreciate her sex.’

‘No,’ thrust in Gussie Moy; ‘I want to know why a woman can’t go about without a dowager waddling after her.’ (‘Thank you,’ breathed Lady Tyrrell into Herbert’s ear, ‘nor go to a club.’)

‘There was such a club proposed in London,’ said Captain Duncombe, ‘and do you know, Gussie, the name of it?’

‘No!’

‘The Middlesex Club!’

‘There! it is just as Mrs. Tallboys said, you will do nothing but laugh at us, or else talk sentiment about our refining you. Now, I want to be free to amuse myself.’

‘I don’t think those trifling considerations will be great impediments in your way,’ said Lady Tyrrell in her blandest tone. ‘Is that actually the carriage? Thank you, Mrs. Tallboys. This is good-bye, I believe. I am sorry there has not been more time for a fuller exposition to-night.’

‘There would have been, but I never was so interrupted,’ said Mrs. Tallboys in an undertone, with a displeased look at Jenny at the other end of the room.

Declamation was evidently more the Muse’s forte than argument, but her aside was an aside, and that of the jockey friend was not. ‘So you waited for us to give your part of the lecture, Miss Moy?’

‘Of course. What’s the use of talking to a set of women and parsons, who are just the same?’

Poor Herbert’s indignant flush infinitely amused the party who were cloaking in the hall. ‘Poor Gussie; her tongue runs fast,’ said Mrs. Duncombe.

‘Emancipated!’ said Jenny. ‘Good-bye, Mrs. Duncombe. Please let us be educated up to our privileges before we get them.’

‘A Parthian shot, Jenny,’ said Julius, as they gave her a homeward lift in the carriage. ‘You proved yourself the fittest memberess for the future parliament to-night.’

‘To be elected by the women and parsons,’ said Jenny, with a little chuckle of fun. ‘Poor Herbert!’

‘I only wish that girl was a man, that I might horsewhip her,’ was the clerical sentiment growled out from Herbert’s corner of the carriage. ‘Degradation of her sex! She’s a standing one!’

DISOBEDIENT CECIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF ‘MRS. JERNINGHAM’S JOURNAL.’

CHAPTER XIII.

THE interest and pleasure with which Cecil looked forward to the Penny Reading on this especial evening seemed exaggerated, even to herself, when she paused to reflect on it; but the idea of meeting Juliet again was so delightful that, as she said to Helen, it accounted for anything. This idea made her endure with equanimity the being chaperoned by the Lesters, if she had not had it to support her such chaperonage might have very decidedly disturbed her temper, and it also lent a glow to the entertainment itself, which in Cecil’s opinion was generally one of the least entertaining things imaginable.

On the present evening, however, the literature made use of was of a lighter description, and altogether of a nature not generally known to

Penny Readings. The occasion was intended to be especially for children. The schools attended, and the villagers brought their children with them in greater force than usual. Instead of a number of small pieces and extracts from books being given, only one thing, and that complete in itself, was read; but it was read by a number of people! Any one who in a drawing-room has ever heard a drama read aloud—a number of copies being used, and different people reading the different characters—will know how much spirit, grace, and interest is added by this method of treatment; and at Byfield—why, I wonder, at Byfield alone? this amusement had been adopted for Penny Readings.

Sometimes the dramas selected might be of a grave character, but to-night that was not the case, as even the name in the programme showed, for that name was “Doctor Bubble;” and the children grinned expectantly from ear to ear at the very name. A younger brother of the clergyman, Mr. Fairbairn, undertook the character of Doctor Bubble himself, and read and sang with equal spirit. Some of his nephews appeared as the Mayor and Aldermen, who formed part of the *dramatis personæ*; Miss Lindon, the governess at the rectory, was Granny, while Trot and Tiny were respectively read by two young ladies, Ellen and Fanny Feeron, visitors in the neighbourhood, who being well up in entertainments of the kind, had a larger fund of courage than the villagers, and set them the good example of thinking of others more than themselves, and, therefore, not being shy. Fred Fairbairn, besides enacting the part of the hero, Doctor Bubble, was what may be called stage manager. He read aloud the list of *dramatis personæ*, explained to the audience clearly, and more than once, which characters were taken by the different performers, recalled this to their memories from time to time in the course of the reading when necessary, repeated all the stage directions as they occurred, and if a few words of explanation were now and then required, threw them in in a brief and spirited way. A stage manager of this kind is essential when a drama is read in character at a public meeting.

DOCTOR BUBBLE.

DOCTOR BUBBLE.
THE MAYOR.
TROT.
FOUR ALDERMEN.

GRANNY GRAY.
TINY.
JEMIMA (*Servant to DOCTOR BUBBLE.*)
THE KITTEN.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—INTERIOR OF A COTTAGE.

(GRANNY GRAY in a wretched truckle bed at the back; the KITTEN asleep by the fire; TROT and TINY conversing in front.)

TINY. Alas, the snow is on the ground;
I am afraid to venture out!

TROT. If you were lost, you would be found
By little footsteps dropp'd about.

TINY. What is not lost you cannot find,
My footsteps are afraid to go.

TROT. Alas, the snow is very kind ;
You need not fear the kindly snow.

TINY. When night comes creeping round and round
I fear its length'ning shades to mark,
And when the snow is on the ground
I think the earth is in the dark.
I tremble for myself—don't you ?—
When there is not a gleam of light ;
And for the earth I tremble, too,
When it is hidden from my sight.

TROT. O, girls are fanciful enough
To banish wisdom from the schools ;
But boys are made of sterner stuff :
Boys have not leisure to be fools !
Our Granny lies in sickness sore,
And one of us must go, 'tis plain,
And fetch the doctor, to restore
Our Granny to herself again ;
And one of us must stay at home
While Granny lies so sad and sick ;
So, will you go ? or will you come ?
The choice is yours, determine quick.

TINY. All by myself I dare not stay
While you to outward dangers go—
I dare not take the woodland way,
While earth is hidden by the snow !
What can I do ?

TROT (*takes a penny out of his pocket*). When reason fails,
Chance must assume the reins instead ;
You shall remain if it is tails,
And you shall go if 'tis a head. (*Tosses up.*)
'Tis heads, and you must go !

TINY. I will !
And now 'tis fixed I do not mind ;
For, since poor Granny is so ill,
To loiter would be most unkind.

[*Takes her hat and little red cloak, and puts them on.*]

TROT. You need not feel the least alarm ;
Pluck up a spirit, darling do !—
For nobody on earth would harm
So nice a little thing as you !

TINY. Kiss me, dear brother.

TROT. Pet, good-bye. (*They kiss.*)
Fear nothing, and be very fleet,
The snow-flakes on the ground that lie
Are only cushions for your feet.

TINY. Ah, brother ! but what lurks below—
A sadden'd earth that's full of fear !
You laugh, but that it is, I know,
And I'm so sorry for it, dear.

TROT. The earth is bound in slumber deep ;
Darkness and fear are quite forgot,—
You're not afraid when fast asleep,
Though all is dark ?

TINY. Of course I'm not !

TROT. You nestle 'neath white covering,
While waiting for the morning's glow,
And earth, while waiting for the spring,
Nestles beneath the kindly snow.

TINY. I'll try to think your words are true,

And earth is safe in slumber laid ;
 But O, how much I wish I knew
 For *certain* it is not afraid ! (TROT starts back.)
 What is the matter ?

TROT. I have thought
 Of something that is full of pain,
 And may prevent our getting aught
 To make poor Granny well again.
 They say the Doctor's *such* a man
 For running up his little bill,—
 I've been as saving as I can ;
 But *who* can save when friends are ill ?—
 O ask him if he'll come, at first,
 And, without money, give advice ;
 I'll pay him in a week at worst,
 For then the corn will bring its price.

TINY. Ah, much I fear he will *not*, then,—
 Old Farmer Grumble says that he
 Is quite a savage among men,
 And just a lion for his fee ;
 Alas, if I should ask in vain,
 And he should roughly bid me go,
 I never *can* come home again
 If Doctor Bubble answers " No ! " (*Wrings her hands*).

TROT. Now is there nothing you could take ?

TINY (*touching each thing as she mentions it*). The clock ?

TROT. The cold would spoil its springs.

TINY. The vase ?

TROT. You'd let it drop and break—
 You're such a girl for breaking things !

TINY. Your jacket ?

TROT. That he could not touch.

TINY. My doll ?

TROT. He'd think you were in play.

TINY. A book !

TROT. O no ; he talks so much,
 He has no time to read, they say.

TINY. What *can* I take ?

TROT. What *can* you take ?

TINY (*suddenly*). I know !

TROT. What is it ?

TINY.

Come and see !

[Leads him to fire-place.

Brother, altho' my heart should break,
 I'll give my kitten for a fee !

TROT (*startled and considering*). Well, he must like poor little tit,
 Her coaxing tricks, her pretty art ;
 But Tiny, *can* you part with it ?

Would it not *really* break your heart ? [Looks at her doubtfully.

TINY (*solemnly*). It is my duty !

TROT. Yes ; but then—
 (Don't hide your face behind your curls !)—

Duty is more for boys and men,
 Than for such *very* little girls !

TINY (*smiling through her tears*). That would be difficult to prove ;
 When Duty can the power bring,
 Of being kind to those they love,
 For little girls it's just the thing.

TROT (*kissing her*). You are a darling ! If I'm right,
 He'll come, tho' not by fee beguil'd :

The man would be a lion, quite,
Who took her kitten from a child !

[*They take a basket, and put the kitten into it.*]

Now, put her in the softest part,
Cover her up with this and that ;
Tiny, I wish with all my heart
I'd never teas'd the little cat !

TINY (*very earnestly*). She never did bear malice, dear,
Her heart's too soft for any in it ;
I've seen her when quite full of fear
Pur and forgive you in a minute.

TROT (*discontentedly*). We boys are much too wild and rough ;
Kittens and girls are nicer far ;
They're somehow made of the same stuff,
And worthy of each other are.

SCENE II.—A STREET.

(*Enter TINY, in hat and cloak, with her basket on her arm ; she knocks at a door, which JEMIMA opens.*)

TINY (*curtsying*). Does Doctor Bubble live here, please ?

JEM. He does ; but not for you, I doubt :
He is a doctor who takes fees,
And will not go his rounds without.

TINY (*curtsying*). But Granny's ill.

JEM. (*indifferently*). Is she, indeed ?
It is a most unhealthy season.

TINY. And she a doctor's aid doth need.

JEM. (*scornfully*). But will she get one for that reason ?

TINY. I've come to fetch one through the snow.

JEM. But will he go because you've come ?

TINY. And I have brought a fee, you know !

JEM. O, then of course he is at home !

[*They enter the house.*]

SCENE III.—A MAGNIFICENT ROOM.

(*DOCTOR BUBBLE, a horrible looking creature, grotesquely dressed, sitting at a table, drinking and singing.*)

DOCT. B. (*sings*). With a rub a dub dub, sing low, sing high,
And a fall de lall lall for the earth and sky ;
And a rub a dub dub, sing high, sing low,
And a fall de lall lall, for the way we go ;
And a rub a dub dub, sing rub a dub dub,
For the wise old man who lived in a tub ;
And a fall de lall lall, sing fall de lall lall,
For the wiser old woman who lived not at all,
And a rubara, rubara, rubara, dub, dub—dub—dub.

[*Drinks.*]

(*Enter JEMIMA, leading TINY.*)

JEM. Here is a child, whose Granny's ill,
And wants a doctor's face to see ;
I kept her at the wicket till
She said she'd brought a proper fee.

DOCT. B. A child ? How dare a child come here
When day is done and labours end ?
But if she brings a fee it's clear
I on her worship must attend ;
But first we'll hear her sing a song,
For music makes the minutes dance ;
The day is short, the night is long ;
Advance, Miss Minnikin, advance !

TINY (*curtsying*). I'm not Miss Minnikin, Sir, I
Am only Little Tiny, Sir. (*Drops another curtsy.*)

DOCT. B. With all my heart, my dear, reply
To *any* name that you prefer.

TINY (*curtsying*). Please, Sir, that name is Tiny.

DOCT. B.

Well,

I like three-fourths of Tiny, too,
For I like *Tin* (*claps his pockets*), and I can tell
Also the reason *why* I do.

Have you a fee? (*Grimaces hideously at her.*)

TINY (*curtsying*). Yes, Sir, I have,
Directly it shall be display'd.

(*Aside*) I wish my heart would feel more brave!
I hope I do not *seem* afraid.

DOCT. B. If you've a fee the thing's all right;
You'll fee-ind a fee-aithful fee-end in me;
I'll dare the terrors of to-night
Just for the pleasure of the fee;
But first the little song.

TINY (*curtsying*). O Sir,
Poor Granny is so ill!

DOCT. B. *N'importe,*
If you've a tongue, young woman, stir
That tongue, and sing as you've been taught.

TINY. If Trot were here! What *shall* I sing?
(*Aside*) O, how I wish I had not come!
I cannot think of anything;
I never sing, except at home!

TINY'S Song.

The sun did arise
In the bright, clear skies,
Making the world like a beautiful fair;
And blossoms and bees,
And birdies and breeze,
All were delighted to find themselves there!

The world it was cold,
And growing quite old,
When the sun suddenly woke up the spring,
And, looking around,
It certainly found
That life was a very enjoyable thing.

Delight is not known
To nature alone—
Nothing without it can flourish and thrive;
And spirits like ours
Resemble the flowers,
Wanting the sunshine to keep them alive.

There's many a one
Would die without sun
Shining about them, below and above;
There's many a heart
Would shiver and start,
But for the sunshine of kindness and love!

DOCT. B. Bravo, Miss Minnikin! bravo!
You choral like a chorister.

TINY (*curtsying*). But that is not my name, you know!
My name is Little Tiny, Sir!

DOCT. B. Now for the fee, and then we'll go ;
It is a double fee, at least,
That takes me tramping through the snow,
Away from an unfinish'd feast.

Where are your pocket and your purse ?

TINY (*curtsying*). I've neither, Sir !

DOCT. B. (*grimacing hideously*). You've neither, miss ?
The Granny will grow worse and worse
Whose grandchild answers me like this !

TINY. I pray you——

DOCT. B. Am I then beguil'd ?

What will his trouble reimburse

Who has been talking to a child

Without a pocket or a purse ?

(*Faces her in a violent manner*)—WHERE is your fee ?

TINY (*curtsying*). My fee is here—
Safe in this basket, Sir.—(*Holds it towards him.*)

DOCT. B. Well done !

My goodness, what a little dear !

The fee must be a thumping one ! (*Looks eagerly at the basket.*)

TINY. My fee is something that I love—

Something I think is sure to please—

Something your judgment will approve,

And call the very best of fees ;

My kitten, Sir.—(*Opens the basket, displaying the kitten.*)

DOCT. B. Why, how is this ?

A kitten ! rubbish ! take it hence !

You dare to tantalise me, miss,

And play your tricks at my expense !

You dare——

TINY. O no, I do not dare ;

I never dared do anything ;

You'll like this kitten, I declare !

Just try her with a cork and string.

DOCT. B. (*in a violent rage*). I'll cork her up, and string her too—

The string is strong, the cork is big,—

I'll have her drowned ; and as for you,

I'll roast you like a sucking pig !

Jemima !

(*Enter JEMIMA.*)

Yes, Sir.

DOCT. B. Shut them up

Safe in the larder ; mix some brine ;

To-morrow on the cat I'll sup ;

Next day upon the child I'll dine.

(*Winks at JEMIMA violently and horribly.*)

JEM. I need not salt them ?

DOCT. B. (*reflects*). On a plate

The kitten may be fried in smoke ;

The child be roasted trim and straight,

Just like a pig *without* a poke.

TINY (*sobbing*). Please, Sir, don't eat me (*curtsies*) Sir, I thought
You'd like the kitten !

DOCT. B. (*waving his hand*). Fried in yeast,

And smoked as Francatelli taught,

A cat is a delicious beast.

TINY. Please, Sir, don't eat my little cat.

DOCT. B. I'll eat you, too, dear,—that's my plan.

TINY (*in despair*). O, when my brother hears of that !
You wicked, wicked, wicked man !

DOCT. B. Jemima, take the pair away,
And put them in the larder, please ;
I'll teach my patients they must pay
With something more than kitten-fees.

TINY (*sobbing*). My Trot will pay you in a week.

DOCT. B. A week ? O yes ; I wish him joy !
If Trot says that, he is a sneak.

TINY (*indignantly*). He's not a sneak, Sir, he's a boy !

DOCT. B. I'll eat you as the clock strikes one
For dinner ; on the cat I'll sup ;
I'll eat you up, sure as a gun !

TINY. O Sir, *please* do not eat me up !

DOCT. B. I'm as despotic as the Pope,
And what I say I do—I do !

[JEMIMA carries TINY off, she struggling and looking back.

TINY. And if you eat me, how I hope
That I shall disagree with you !

ACT II.

SCENE I.—THE COTTAGE.

(GRANNY GRAY in bed ; TROT at front of the stage.)

TROT. How long she is ! when *will* she come,
And bring our Granny some relief ?
Poor Tiny ! *when* will she reach home ?
I hope she has not come to grief !

GRANNY. Trotty, I want the Doctor.

TROT. Yes ;

We've sent for him—he'll soon be here.

GRANNY. Trotty, I want him.

TROT. And I guess

He's coming, Granny ; never fear !

It's getting dark ; there's not a sound.—(*Peeps out at door.*)

The snow is such a ghostly white
That Tiny's fears for hidden ground
Seem to me reasonable quite.

I'm growing nervous !

GRANNY. Trotty !

TROT. Well ?

GRANNY. I want the Doctor !

TROT. Yes, I know.

GRANNY. I want him.

TROT. O you heard me tell,
He's coming quickly through the snow.
O, could I see him at the door !

GRANNY. I want the Doctor, Trotty, lad !

TROT. Granny, don't say so any more,
Unless you wish to drive me mad !

GRANNY. Trotty, I want the Doctor !

TROT But

I cannot leave you quite bereft !
Were doors and windows barred and shut,
Would you be frightened to be left ?

GRANNY. I want the Doctor !

TROT. Shall I go ?

GRANNY. I want the Doctor !

TROT. (*holds up his hand listening*). Not so fast !
I hear a rustling through the snow !

This welcome Doctor comes at last !

(The door, which he had left ajar, is pushed open.—Enter the KITTEN.)

TROT. The kitten ! No one else ! How so ?
What *can* the meaning be of that ?

GRANNY. Is it the Doctor ?

TROT. Granny, no !

GRANNY. What is it, then ?

TROT. It is the cat !

GRANNY. The cat ?

TROT. Which for a fee she gave.

GRANNY. Who gave it ?

TROT. Tiny.

GRANNY. For a fee ?

Poor little soul, by love made brave ;

And did she give her cat for me ?

(TROT takes the KITTEN up and finds something tied round her neck.)

TROT. Here's something tied beneath her nose,
Close round her neck. What can it be ?

'Tis a prescription, I suppose ? (*Takes it off and opens it.*)

No, 'tis a letter, and for me ! (*Reads.*)

'Dear brother, you are brave and big,

Help me as quickly as you can ;

Before I'm roasted like a pig,

And eaten by a wicked man.

Jemima's put me in the larder,

While she prepares the fire and spit,

And I—which makes my lot the harder—

Must send away my little kit.

The wicked man would eat her first ;

He planned it gaily, like a joke.

Brother, I think my heart would burst

To see the darling fried in smoke !

I hope she'll canter through the snow,

And find you ere the wretch has miss'd her,

And then, dear Trot, I surely know

You'll try to save your little sister.'

TROT. My Tiny ! Eat her like a pig ?

O no ; he neither can, nor shall !

I *knew* the fellow was a prig ;

But surely, *not* a cannibal ?

There's many a step between the two ;

He *might* be one and not the other.

Now, what on earth am I to do ?

For am I not a boy and brother ?

My Tiny ! O my little joy !

Without you everything is flat ;

O, what a letter for a boy

And brother to get by a cat ! (*Hides his face, sobbing.*)

GRANNY (*sitting up in bed and speaking very earnestly.*)

What's large to you, to me is small ;

What's old to me, to you is new ;

I have experience of all

That comes like thunderbolts on you !

The Doctor's threats are met by law.

He must not eat a child, nor dare

He fry in smoke ; for once I saw

The Magna Charta, and 'tis there

He who would roast a child, or fry

A kitten, meets from law his doom ;

And the same law 'tis settled by,

That chimneys their own smoke consume.

This Doctor must be put in jail ;

You seek the Mayor, and state your case,
 And if a man should offer bail,
 Say he's a scoundrel to his face !
 Go, ere another word is said ;
I'll pet the cat —the house *I'll* keep.
 Seek him before he seeks his bed—
 Mayors are irate if roused from sleep.

TROT (*rather timidly*). Dear Granny, we ne'er heard them name
 The *Doctor* as a cannibal.

You do not *think* the Mayor's the same ?

GRANNY (*firmly*). I do not, Trot, and never shall,—
 A doctor makes himself, a Mayor
 Is made ; no corporation could
 Appoint a cannibal ; they dare
 Not do it, even if they would !

TROT. It is so shocking !

GRANNY (*still more firmly*). Not at all !
 Cannibalism, as a rule,
 Does not exist ; the risk is small,
 And if you're frightened you're a fool !
 Keep up your spirits, and your pluck,
 Each rule has its exception, so
 Our meeting one is *our* ill-luck,
 But only proves the rule, you know.

TROT. Granny, how wise you are ; how nice
 It is to hear you ; you are old,
 You know the world, and give advice,
 And *I* will do as *I* am told.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—A HANDSOME APARTMENT.

(THE MAYOR, a fat, pleasant-looking creature, sits in an easy-chair, in the
 centre of the room, smiling. Enter two ALDERMEN.)

FIRST ALD. Your Worship, here's a boy, who's run
 All through the snow to seek your Grace.

MAYOR. What sort of boy ?

SECOND ALD. A little one,
 With an uncommon, pleasant face.

MAYOR. What sort of face ?

FIRST ALD. Red as a rose,
 Round as an apple ; eyes as blue
 As heaven ; and a cocky nose,
 That seems to ask you how you do.

MAYOR. Of course I'll see that boy.

SECOND ALD. Perhaps
 I'll warm some turtle at the grate ?
 Those sort of little village chaps
 Don't always get the thing first-rate !

MAYOR (*chuckling good-humouredly*). Yes, by all means.

FIRST ALD. (*going to door*). Walk in, my lad ;
 Come, cherry-cheeks, his Worship's here ;
 To see good boys he's always glad.

[*Enter* TROT.

Hold up your head, my man, don't fear,
 He'll give you heaps of good advice.

[*Exit* ALDERMEN.

TROT (*very earnestly to* MAYOR).
 Please, Sir, my sister loves her cat.

MAYOR. Does she, my boy ? that's very nice !
 But did you come to tell me that ?

TROT. She took it to the Doctor, Sir—
She fancied it was sure to please,
And that her kitten he'd prefer
To every other kind of fees.

We have no money—Granny's ill. (*Sobs.*)

MAYOR. Don't cry, I beg of you, my boy !

TROT. She loves her little kitten, still,
For Granny's sake, she went with joy.

MAYOR. Then she's a darling !

TROT. That she is !

MAYOR. Where is she ? If I do not err,
I'd like to give that child a kiss.

TROT. She's in the Doctor's larder, Sir !

MAYOR. She's *where* ?

TROT. The wicked Doctor's took
And put her in his larder ; he
Will have her roasted by his cook,
And then he'll eat her. O dear me ! (*Bursts out crying.*)
(SECOND ALDERMAN *runs in with a basin of turtle soup.*)

SECOND ALD. Drink this, my boy ; it's very hot,
And very good, indeed. Ah, ha !

TROT (*motioning it away*). O, thank you, Sir, I'd rather not ;
May it be kept for grandmama ?

MAYOR. That's my fine fellow ! (*To SECOND ALD.*) Ask the way,
And take it to her.

FIRST ALD. May I, too ?

MAYOR. Yes, Alderman, of course you may !

[*Exeunt ALDERMEN, carrying the soup between them, and smiling and nodding to each other over it.*]

Now, boy, there's work for us to do.

This Doctor goes too far ; our day
Yields much to science ; but there are
Things yet forbid—fearless, I say.

This Doctor goes a step too far ;
To circumvent him we must try ;
And though he fiercest be of men,
Sustained by conscious virtue, I
Will beard this Doctor in his den.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—DOCTOR BUBBLE'S ROOM.

(DOCTOR *in his easy-chair* ; TINY *standing before him.*)

DOCT. B. Will you be roasted ?

TINY (*curtsying*). Please, Sir, no ;
I'd rather not.

DOCT. B. Will you be boiled ?

TINY. O no, indeed !

DOCT. B. (*annoyed*). Don't answer so !
If kept too long you will be spoiled.

TINY. Granny and Trot both spoil'd me.

DOCT. B. Pooh !

I am not Granny, I, nor Trot ! (*Regards her thoughtfully.*)
I think I'll have you as a stew,
Ex-treme-ly savoury and hot !
Jemima !

(*Enter JEMIMA.*)

Yes, Sir.

DOCT. B. Get the pan ;
I think we'll stew her. Ha ! Who's here ?
(*Enter the MAYOR and TROT.*)

Who is this boy ? and who this man ?

Who suddenly like ghosts appear !

(TROT and TINY run up to each other.)

TINY. O Trot !

TROT. O Tiny !

TINY.

Is it you ?

How's Granny ?

TROT. Better.

TINY. How's the tit ?

And did she come ? and did she mew ?

And take my note, and give you it ?

TROT. Yes, bless her heart, the little pet ;

Your life is saved ; our grief dispers'd.

TINY (*shakes her head sorrowfully*). O no, dear Trot ; I'm to be ate ;

But I *am* glad I've seen you first. (*Kisses him.*)

MAYOR (*to DOCTOR*). Who dares to cook a little girl

While I have strength to bear the mace,

I hope he knows that I can hurl

Unheard of judgments in his face ?

DOCT. B. (*very humbly*). I did not cook her !

MAYOR (*severely*). But I think

You would have done so !

DOCT. B. (*eagerly*). 'Twas a jest !

I wink'd, Jemima *saw* me wink ;

I wish'd to frighten her at best.

MAYOR. Jemima, *did* he wink ?

JEM. He did !

MAYOR (*winking*). Like this ?

JEM. Your Worship, just the same.

DOCT. B. (*confusedly*). A winking joke is not forbid ;

I meant no harm ; I'm not to blame !

MAYOR. I blame you much, nor heed your prayers,

Severe will be your punishment !

Your house, your grounds, your railway shares ;

Your money in the three per cents ;

Your greenbacks and exchequer bills ;

Your china, linen, clothes, and plate ;

All you have ever got through wills,

And all you've earned, I confiscate,

And give this child ; she shall live here,

And you within her cottage small

Shall feed on pottage steeped in beer

And treacle.

DOCT. B. (*throwing up his hands*). I deserve it all !

MAYOR (*to TROT*). Look out, dear boy, for Aldermen.

Do you see any ?

TROT (*looks out of window*). Yes, Sir, some

Down in the street.

MAYOR. Beckon them, then,

And bid them to their master come.

TROT (*twitching MAYOR's gown*). Sir, think of Granny.

MAYOR. Well, my dear.

TROT. Granny must come.

MAYOR. O that's of course.

TINY. Sir, may we fetch our Granny here ?

MAYOR. We'll go and fetch her in full force.

(*Enter THIRD and FOURTH ALDERMEN.*)

MAYOR (*pointing to DOCTOR BUBBLE*). I'm sorry he's a prisoner.)

ALD.

We

Are sorry.

MAYOR. But he said he'd cook
And eat that child !

THIRD ALD. Did he ? Dear me,
That's *not* a thing to overlook !

FOURTH ALD. What's to be done ?

MAYOR. The child must take
His property ?

ALD. That's evident.

MAYOR. Her cottage he his home must make ?

ALDER. A reasonable punishment !

MAYOR. Then let us quickly get it done
(I like to execute a plan),
Tiny and Trot may forward run,
I'll follow with the wicked man.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE THE LAST.—THE COTTAGE.

(GRANNY GRAY propped up in an easy-chair, FIRST and SECOND ALDERMEN
one on each side of her, holding a basin of turtle soup between them in
front of her, and each with a spoon feeding her.)

FIRST ALD. It's nice ?

GRANNY. It's very nice !

SECOND ALD. A treat ?

GRANNY. Indeed it is.

FIRST ALD. The fat is fat ?

GRANNY. Exquisite fat !

SECOND ALD. Luscious and sweet,
And very rich ?

GRANNY. It is all that.

FIRST ALD. Do you enjoy it ?

GRANNY. Yes—a few.

SECOND ALD. Make *more* of it then if you can !

FIRST ALD. Do lick your lips, dear creature, *do* !

SECOND ALD. Try to eat like an Alderman !

(Enter TROT and TINY running ; followed by MAYOR, and DOCTOR BUBBLE
between THIRD and FOURTH ALDERMEN.)

TROT. O Granny, Granny, here we are,
Made rich by such a charming law.

TINY. We've got a house that's nicer far
Than any house you ever saw.

TROT. Exchequer bills,

TINY. And three per cents,

TROT. And little greenbacks in a troop,

TINY. And plate,

TROT. And china ornaments.

GRANNY. And I have got some turtle soup !

TROT. You'll grow so very strong and well
When you are rich, you cannot think ;

TINY. (*Taking up, and fondling the KITTEN*)
And puss shall have a silver bell,
Tied round her neck with ribbon pink.

MAYOR (*to ALDERMEN*). Tie up the wicked Doctor's head
In the old woman's head-dress queer,
And lay him in her truckle bed,
And give him potage steeped in beer.

(*The FOUR ALDERMEN seize the DOCTOR, put on the night-cap, tumble him into the
bed, tuck him up, hold him down, and feed him as desired.*)

MAYOR (*to GRANNY*). Now you may leave him to himself,
And with a child in either hand,
May take possession of his pelf,
And all that once was his, command ;

We seek our Corporation hall,
 You seek a splendid home instead,
 While *he* is left in cottage small,
 And in a most unpleasant bed.
 I made a resolution, when
 I first assumed the civic sway,
 I would reward all wicked men
 And all good children in this way.

(*Exit* MAYOR and ALDERMEN on one side, GRANNY GRAY, TROT, and TINY with the KITTEN in her arms on the other. DOCTOR BUBBLE'S voice is heard faintly crying from the bed, 'JEMIMA!')

CURTAIN FALLS.

The little drama, which was extremely well read by the various performers, and much assisted by Fred Fairbairn's spirited little explanations thrown in, as we have before mentioned, here and there from time to time, was listened to with considerable amusement by the audience, and received with both laughter and applause. After which a vote of thanks was proposed and unanimously passed to the readers.

Cecil, however, was by no means contented with her share of the evening's entertainment. She and Helen had arrived with the Lesters early. "Stupid people always go early to everything" had been the remark she made to herself when she looked round and saw that Juliet and her Colonel had not yet made their appearance. Of course she could do nothing but take her seat with her party, and to her immense vexation and worry of spirits she found all the chairs near to her were gradually filling, and that there was no chance for her having anything to do with her beloved Juliet even when she did come. She looked despondingly towards Helen, elevating her eyebrows and shaking her head, as it was a slight comfort to her to do *something* to mark her vexation and disgust, and she was glad to meet Helen's glance of ready and intelligent sympathy. But the expression of misery, and the most sympathetic reception of that expression, are poor comfort, while the misery remains the same. And Cecil felt unreasonably angry with the Lesters for coming so early, and unreasonably *not* angry with the Wyndhams for being so late.

At last—not till after "Doctor Bubble" had actually commenced—but at last Colonel and Mrs. Wyndham entered the room. Juliet a little pale but very lovely—wrapped up in a charming blue opera-cloak, with black velvet hat and feather, tipped also with azure on her coils and masses of golden hair, treading daintly and glancing all about the room as if for some thing or person worthy for her eyes to rest on, till the beautiful eyes met Cecil's, and then her face flashed into smiles, and the pretty head on the long slender throat nodded in a manner at once gay and friendly. Quite a flood of joyful affection rushed over Cecil as she returned the look and the nod, and threw an expression into her countenance, and into the slight gesture she ventured to make, that showed her despair at not being able to join her friend.

Then the Wyndhams had to take their seats at the other side of the room from where Cecil and her detested party sat, and

everybody's attention must be given to the reading, so that Cecil had only the pleasure of knowing that her friend was breathing the same atmosphere that she was, and of hoping that when the singing commenced they might contrive to be thrown together.

When the singing began Juliet and Cecil met on the platform and exchanged an eager affectionate pressure of the hand.

'Why did you come so early?' said one.

'Why did you come so late?' retorted the other.

Then Colonel Wyndham shook hands quite warmly with Cecil, looking at her with kind piercing eyes as he did so, and Cecil, delighted, gave him a bright embarrassed look and smiled till she almost laughed.

'She is quite well again, you see,' said he with a proud loving glance at the beautiful wife leaning on his arm.

A sweet glow of pleasure stole through Cecil's heart at the words and manner as addressed to herself. He seemed by them to recognise not only the certainty of her sympathy, but almost a sort of property on her part in his beloved Juliet, and Cecil's cheeks blushed and eyes sparkled with joy.

'That was a very amusing reading' said Juliet, 'quite fun—I had no idea anything of the sort was admitted at good places like these—surely the world is growing wiser in its old age. I am sure a few years ago "Doctor Bubble" would have been considered frivolous and waste of pre-ci-ous time.'

She spoke the last two words through her nose with a drawl and a roguish look in her charming eyes.

'Don't speak so loud, my love,' said the Colonel hastily.

Juliet pouted.

'I spoke as low as possible without whispering, and one *can't* whisper through one's nose—at least *I* can't—if *you* can it's very ill-natured of you not to have taught me before now,' she said.

'Hush!' said the Colonel, 'they are going to sing.'

'Let them,' replied Juliet softly, 'and I am going to talk—why should I be hushed more than they?'

However she did not really go on talking, but with an air of assumed martyr-like patience listened to the song.

It was a duet between Fred Fairbairn and his sister-in-law, the rector's wife. She sang the first four lines of each verse, and he the two next, and in the last two lines their voices joined together.

DUET.

She. Spinning round, and moving on,
Earth is always turning;
Science teaches this alone,
Nobody discerning.

He. Nothing is more staid and still
Than this earth we tread and see.

Both. Is it not a miracle?
If not, what can it be?

She. Earth is round as any ball,
 Yet 'tis past believing
 That it should be round at all,
 Nobody perceiving.

He. Nothing is more flat and plain
 Than this earth we tread and see

Both. Here's a miracle again !
 If not, what can it be ?

She. He who doubted facts like these
 Would be much admonish'd,
 So we credit them with ease,
 Nobody astonish'd.

He. If we disbelieve our eyes,
 And the things we touch and see,

Both. Why are higher mysteries
 Only—what cannot be ?

This song took the fancy of the audience, who encored it vociferously, and the brother and sister good-naturedly gave it again. Then the Doctor was asked if he would not sing his song. First of all he demurred, saying that it was hard to talk of a man's song, as it stigmatized him as a man of one song, and when this objection was removed by his being begged to sing as many songs as ever he liked, and promised an *encore* in each and all, he remarked that he wondered a good deal at their applying to a medical man for anything after the drama he had heard read that evening, and that he would take the opportunity of asking if anything personal had been intended. He was cheered for this, upon which he bowed, and immediately sang his song.

FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY.

That the blossoms of a cherry,
 Forming clusters in the Spring,
 Can be changed into a berry
 Is a most surprising thing.
 Faith is wanted to believe it,
 Hope, to watch it day by day,
 And when we at last receive it,
 Charity, to give away.

That the little babe we cherish,
 Who can neither think nor act,
 Has a soul that cannot perish,
 Is a most astounding fact.
 Faith accepts it without proving,
 Hope breathes forth a joyful pray'r,
 Charity (which is but loving)
 Hovers round it everywhere.

Link'd together, joining ever,
 Lovely and benignant Three ;
 Three in one that nought can sever,
 Faith, and Hope, and Charity.
 But for Faith no Hope can reach us,
 But for Hope no light can beam,
 But for Charity to teach us,
 Faith and Hope are but a dream.

After this the glees followed, in which Adela, Lucy, Cecil, and almost all the other young people took a part, except Helen, who comforted herself for the want of that most charming of gifts—a singing voice—the gift which perhaps of all those given affords at the same moment most pleasure to the possessor, and to those for whose benefit it is exercised. She comforted herself for her want of this by reflecting on the agonies of shyness her timid nature would have experienced, if she had been obliged to sing on an occasion like the present.

‘If I sing at all,’ said she to herself, ‘I could never be anything but a singing mouse.’

‘O Helen,’ whispered Cecil at the same moment, as a glee was being performed in which she did not happen to take a part, ‘look at Juliet! Did any one ever look so lovely as she does singing? Did you know that a mouth *could* open wide into such a pretty little round as that? I did not! Now look at Adela Lester! She certainly makes faces, doesn’t she?’

There was something quite triumphant in the tone in which Cecil asked the concluding question. But she did not get perfect satisfaction from Helen’s answer.

‘Well, no; not exactly faces. She does not look as pretty as Mrs. Wyndham, of course.’

‘I should rather think not!’ interrupted Cecil with indignation.

‘Still, she only twists her mouth a very little, and I think she looks quite nice while she sings; indeed, Cecil, she has a sweet pleasant face!’ cried Helen with courageous honesty.

‘O Helen, Helen!’ murmured Cecil.

‘But what harm *does* it do us, Cecil?’ said Helen, ‘why should not she?’

‘You forget that she is my cat,’ replied Cecil, with mournful reproach.

‘Yes,’ said Helen candidly, ‘I *did* forget that,’ and then the two girls had to attend to the singing again, and hold their tongues, for Fred Fairbairn was asked for a solo before the inevitable, always welcome, and always grand ‘God Save the Queen’ ended the entertainment.

The young man, a fine-looking, good-natured fellow, with a sweet, charming voice, readily complied, and all the glee-singers on the platform joined in the chorus.

LIVE AND LET LIVE.

Friends, if a loaf is ours,
Let the poor have a share;
Friends, if we cherish flow’rs,
Let them scent common air.

Chorus.—Live and let others live
Means that a Christian man
Must to his brothers give
All that he can.

Friends, if we see distress,
 Let us help, far or near ;
 Friends, if a word can bless,
 Let us speak without fear.

Chorus.—Live, &c.

Friends, when the day is bright
 Let use of it be made,
 Friends, in the depths of night
 Let no one be afraid.

Chorus.—Live, &c.

Friends, happiness is such,
 A sweet uncertain boon,
 Friends cannot give too much,
 Too often, or too soon.

Chorus.—Live, &c.

Friends, sorrow is a load
 So very hard to bear,
 Friends meeting on the road
 Must each the burthen share.

Chorus.—Live, &c.

Friends, let us firmly stand,
 And scorning 'tit for tat,'
 Heart to heart, hand to hand,
 Always remember that,

Chorus.—Live, &c.

Fred Fairbairn thundered out the last stanza, and led the chorus also, in such a thundering voice that the enthusiasm spread not only among the singers on the platform, who seemed almost forming themselves into the band of firm standers, heart to heart and hand to hand, and who joined in the chorus with an unexpected force and fervour, but also to the body of the room, containing the audience, who rose almost to a man, as if it had been 'God save the Queen' they were listening to, and whose voices soared and swelled and swayed, as they too joined in the chorus, the shrill clear tones of childhood sounding high above all the others, and adding pathos to the burst of vehement feeling as the tones of childhood always do.

'All—that—he—can' came to an end at last, like a thunderbolt, succeeded for one moment by almost startling silence. Then a loud *encore* given by the whole room, like a single voice, and then the chorus once more :—

Live and let others live
 Means that a Christian man
 Must to his brothers give
 All that he can !

after which Fred Fairbairn sat down flushed, laughing, and breathless, amidst renewed bursts of the most exuberant applause.

Juliet Wyndham clapped her slender little hands, encased as they were in the most exquisite lemon-coloured kid gloves, and evinced the greatest delight.

'There !' she cried, 'I have split my gloves, and I have nearly come to an end of my last case, and cannot get more nearer than Paris. I

really wish they would not sing such jolly songs and put one into such an ecstasy. It's expensive being in an ecstasy, if one is to split one's Paris gloves every time ; but I think it's worth it. I like being in an 'ecstasy, don't you, Leo ? Don't you, Cecil ?' appealing with bright coaxing glances first to her husband and then to her friend.

'It was a very good song very well sung,' replied Colonel Wyndham with decision ; 'that young Fairbairn seems a nice fellow.'

'With a voice like an angel—if angels have voices !' cried Juliet unconsciously parodying Miss Edgeworth ; 'he's a dear. What nice things lads are, to be sure ! are not they, love ?' again appealing to her husband. 'Don't you doat on lads ? I do.'

Colonel Wyndham laughed, but he replied even while he laughed, 'Not so loud, Juliet ; those remarks are better at home than on a platform.'

'Not at all,' replied Juliet stoutly. 'I'm not a bit ashamed of doating on lads. Why should I be ? Don't you doat on lads too, Cecil ? No ! I suppose you don't because you are young and unmarried, and that makes all the difference. You are too young to doat on lads.'

'My dear Juliet, pray be quiet,' said Colonel Wyndham, in a very low voice. And though his dear Juliet made a little face, and shook her head roguishly, and said under her breath, 'Thank you, dear, I'd rather not,' still the Colonel's request had its due effect, as the Colonel's requests always had on a wife who with all her faults dearly loved and deeply respected her husband. Cecil watched them, and began to feel as she did so, some of the attraction that Helen had expressed before. She felt almost staggered in her resolution of never marrying. But then, she thought to herself—and the thought consoled her—how unlikely it is that there should be another such man as Colonel Wyndham in the world, or being such a man, that he should want to marry me. And therefore I need not mind or think about whether it would be pleasant. And then her thoughts flew off, as they so often did, especially when her future life was in question, flew off and rested with delight on the idea of her brother—her brother—with whom none could compare, not even Juliet's Colonel, and with whom that future life was to be spent, who was to be her closest friend, as well as her only brother, and who was to love her better than any other created being, while she was to pour out on him all the treasures of her loving heart. From one of her sweetest dreams Cecil was rudely awakened by the voice of Adela Lester.

'I have remembered Sir Roland's name,' she said ; 'it is so strange that we should have forgotten it, when yours ought to have brought it to our minds, for curiously enough, it is the same as yours, or very nearly—it is either De Vaux or Vaux—I can't feel quite sure which ; but that was why we called him Sir Roland. It all came back to me quite suddenly.' Adela said this in a pleasant manner, as if she wished to feel herself on good terms with Cecil ; but Cecil experienced an almost unaccountable annoyance—in the first place at being addressed at all by Adela, when every moment that conversation was possible she

wished to devote to Juliet ; in the second at being roused from a dream about her brother by the person she liked least in the world ; and in the third by finding that this idolized brother, and the friend of Frank Lester, whom he had had the impertinence to endeavour to set right, (as his sister called it), and then to quarrel with, were indeed one and the same person. She had but little doubt of this before ; but notwithstanding that, it grated on her feelings, almost like a disagreeable novelty, when she found that doubt, however slight, resolved into certainty.

‘I beg your pardon,’ she said, with extreme haughtiness ; ‘you are speaking perhaps of the original of that photograph we saw at your house ?’

“Yes ; you will remember you wished to know who it was ; and I read you parts of Frank’s letters about him ; but we could not find his name. And at last I have recollected it. We always called him Sir Roland.”

‘And is his name Roland then ?’

‘No, no ; we called him Sir Roland because’—

‘But that is where I am quite at a loss. You called him Roland because his name was either Vaux or De Vaux ?’ said Cecil, raising her eyebrows superciliously.

Adela preserved her good-humour, and laughed quite pleasantly.

‘Yes,’ she said ; ‘we had been reading the opening of the “Bridal of Triermain,” which you know makes out that no maiden of mortal strain can be good enough to match with Sir Roland of Triermain. Now, Sir Roland, though of Triermain, had a surname of his own, and this was De Vaux. Sir Roland de Vaux he has laid him to sleep. Don’t you remember ? And so Frank being always praising his friend, Mr. Vaux, or De Vaux, whichever it was, and talking as if he was better than anybody else, and nobody could be as good as he was, or good enough for him, we took to calling him Sir Roland, because Sir Roland De Vaux was such a paragon also. And then we adopted the name Sir Roland, one and all of us ; Frank, you know, in his letters just as much as ourselves ; and so the real name passed out of our heads.”

‘Yes,’ said Cecil, coldly ; ‘I understand.’

By this time all the singers were being collected together to join in ‘God save the Queen,’ and Cecil and Adela were called to order, and requested to take their places among the others, which they accordingly did, Mrs. Wyndham beckoning Cecil over to stand by her and the Colonel, while Helen remained among the Lesters. For even Helen joined, or was supposed to join, in ‘God save the Queen ;’ every loyal English person being required to have enough voice to petition blessings on their Sovereign in music. This being one of the laws of the English constitution, very often prevents our National Anthem being as great a musical treat as its grand simplicity would otherwise make it. But if not so great a treat to our ears as it might be, it is a greater treat to our hearts than if fewer eager and enthusiastic voices joined in it. On the present occasion it was done full justice to, and as the last notes died away every one felt that the Penny Reading had been a very successful

one. Every one, including Cecil—for was she not standing by Juliet's side, and did not Juliet, as the last 'God save the Queen' was chanted, slip her hand through her arm, so as to make it impossible for her to go away, even if she had wished it?

'I have such quantities to say to you,' said Mrs. Wyndham; 'I intended that we should have chattered in whispers all through the reading, and then you went and stuck yourself off in a far-away corner, so that if we had spoken at all, we must have shouted. Now, with the very best intentions, one can't chatter in shouts, can one?'

Cecil laughed.

'And I believe I have a hundred things to say to you also; and I can't think of one of them—at least, of more than one. O Juliet! are you really quite well again? were you much hurt? was it not dreadful to be thrown?'

'O, I am all right; it is not easy to hurt me,' said Juliet, with her sweet silvery laugh; 'I must be very tough. I have been thrown several times before. I have been thrown out hunting, and I was never a bit frightened. I used to jump up, and jump on again, and gallop off just as if nothing had happened; but I *was* frightened this time, Cecil.'

And Juliet gave a slight scarcely perceptible shiver and turned a little pale.

'That was because you were hurt,' said Cecil anxiously and tenderly.

'No, it is not because I was hurt—I did not know I was hurt—it was as I fell, and it was because I was married! I was unmarried all the other tumbles, Cecil, but this tumble I was married, and it was such a pang to think of my husband. My mind was not clear—I doubt now if I imagined that I was going to die—but I thought of *him*—and I was frightened.'

And Juliet again gave that slight almost imperceptible shiver.

Cecil pressed the hand against her side which rested on her arm, and looked into her face with sympathetic admiring eyes.

'And you are sure that you are quite well again?' she asked after a little pause full of emotion; 'you look pale.'

'Yes,' smiled Juliet, 'and I *feel* pale—I am well enough, only I feel pale—that is just it. I am not quite my big bouncing self again yet, my head is a little lighter than usual, and though a light heart is a pleasant thing, Cecil, I am not sure that a light head is.'

'Do take care of yourself,' said Cecil anxiously, 'it would be so easy for you to do too much; you must have had a great shake—and your head may require rest for some time.'

'There is no occasion for me to take care of myself,' said Juliet with a happy soft little laugh, 'my Colonel takes care of me.'

Cecil glanced admiringly at her Colonel who was standing near talking to the Rector and some of the other gentlemen.

'Yes,' she said, in a low voice, 'he looks as if he could take care of you.'

‘I certainly must not be ill because of the ball,’ continued Mrs. Wyndham; ‘it would be the saddest thing if I was—for then really and truly the ball would have to be put off.’

She spoke seriously, even solemnly, as if she hardly expected Cecil at first sight to believe in anything so stupendously shocking.

But Cecil only replied, ‘Yes, of course it would, nobody would care a bit about it without you—O Juliet, do you really think I shall go?’

‘My dear child, as if there was a doubt about it, as if I could allow there to be a doubt? Why, I have quite determined that you shall, and as I have told you before, whenever I really determine a thing it always happens. I do always have my own way—why, your dress is settled and the flowers bought—did they send you the flowers, Cecil?’

‘Yes,’ replied she, with a momentary recollection that though sent they had not been paid for, and that she did not see her way to paying for them, ‘yes, they came and they are lovely.’

‘And you are absolutely throwing a doubt on wearing them—fie, fie, Cecil—why it is the most afflicting thing on earth to have pretty new things for especial purposes and then not to wear them—so melancholy they look after a little while, laid by in a drawer. Those charming flowers must never become mournful mementoes in that way. Things that have been worn and have pleasant memories hanging about them, are well enough when they are old—but the old new things—still new, though they have grown quite old—are horrible—and it was not for that fate that I selected those pretty creatures and vowed you should wear them at my ball.’

‘Sometimes I really think we shall manage it,’ said Cecil seriously, ‘and then it seems impossible. Helen is quite sure that I shall not be able.’

‘Helen is an infant—a little puss,’ cried Juliet with her bewitching airy gaiety, ‘what does she know of such things? She ought not to have even heard of them—but we are women of the world, my Cecil—you and I—and we know what we are about.’

Both the girls laughed heartily at this idea.

‘She will not turn traitor, I suppose?’ asked Mrs. Wyndham, ‘she won’t tell tales?’

‘What, Helen,’ cried Cecil astonished, ‘O dear no—I should be more likely to tell of myself than Helen of me I believe. I would trust her more than myself.’

‘You are fond of each other?’

‘Fond? O yes, why we are like sisters, and we are real friends.’

‘That is nice—but I have two sisters and I am not fond of either.’

‘O Juliet!’

‘Well—it’s a lie, for I *am* fond of one of them—after a fashion, you know. She’s ten years older than I am, and she has dozens of little children, and a stupid old bore of a husband, so of course it’s not like sisters—but she would be well enough as an aunt or a god-

mother—poor old Jenny—I do like her, and she thinks there is nobody to compare with me.’

‘Yes, I am sure an elder sister would worship you,’ replied Cecil simply; ‘and your other sister, you are fond of her too I suppose?’

‘No, I’m not—why should I be when I should not know her if I met her to-morrow?’ laughed Juliet. ‘She married and went with her husband to India when I was only eight years old, and she has never come here and I have never gone there, so we have not met since. Shouldn’t I like to go to India? I tell the Colonel that there’s no use in being a colonel at all if he can’t order his own regiment to places. He assures me he can’t, but I don’t believe if he did, that anybody could have cheek enough to interfere, do you? and I do wish he’d order himself out to India. I should like India in all ways, and then I should see Winifred again, and I have a great notion that she is a darling.’

‘O, don’t go to India!’ cried Cecil, with quite a pang at her heart.

‘Well, I’m not going, so you need not mind,’ laughed Juliet.

‘Yes, but I should like you to do everything you wish,’ replied Cecil quite gravely and sorrowfully, ‘so I had rather you did not wish to go to India.’

‘You take things so seriously,’ cried Juliet. ‘I have a dozen wishes sometimes in a minute, but it does not do me any harm because they are not granted. I don’t fret! I only wish India in that sort of way.’

‘I think, my dear Miss Vaux,’ said Mrs. Lester, making her way across the platform and first shaking hands with Mrs. Wyndham, ‘that we must be thinking of going now. The room is tolerably empty, and we can make our way out quite easily.’

‘O do let us drive the Miss Vauxes home,’ cried Mrs. Wyndham, ‘our carriage is here—how are you all going? are you driving or walking?’

‘The Byfield fly is at the door and was to take them first and return for us.’

‘Very well then, please let it take you at once, and we will charge ourselves with these young ladies—it will be a lovely moonlight drive, and there is nothing I like better than driving by moonlight, and so does the Colonel. I remember his telling me so before we were married.’

Mrs. Lester could not help laughing a little at that, though she was not at all sure whether Mrs. Wyndham spoke in mere *naïveté* or with the intention of making her laugh. People often indeed did not know whether Juliet was in jest or earnest. Perhaps she did not always know herself. In some natures the two are so curiously blended that it is difficult to tell where one stops and the other commences, and if it was possible to analyse such a thing, the analysers might be surprised to find how often there was *no* stop and *no* commencement at all.

Mrs. Lester, on reflection, did not see any reason why Mrs. Wyndham’s offer should not be accepted. She took it for granted when she saw how

great an intimacy existed that the two families visited. The idea of an acquaintanceship, unknown to and unsanctioned by the authorities, never crossed her mind for a moment, nor is it very surprising that it did not do so. It did not require to be the head of such a family as her own to make the real state of affairs unsuspected and incomprehensible.

Accordingly she thanked Mrs. Wyndham and accepted her proposal, after of course first appealing to Cecil, whose daring spirits could hardly be kept under restraint, at the prospect of such an enchanting conclusion to the evening. If Mrs. Lester might have hesitated in sending off the two girls committed to her care with such a young and giddy *chaperon* as Mrs. Wyndham, the fact of the Colonel being of the party obviated all difficulties, for no one could object to any arrangement made under his protection. So as the Byfield fly had the precedence and was at the door, while Mrs. Wyndham's carriage had not yet drawn up, Mrs. Lester and her daughter said good-night and took their departure.

Then Juliet gave a springing impulse to her figure as if she was going to rise from the floor in a little joyful leap.

'Is not that a splendid plan? have not I pluck?' cried she, 'do you know I hardly expected it to succeed, but nothing venture nothing have. That always has been my motto; and *how* I am rewarded!'

She threw up her eyes in a pretended ecstasy till only the whites were seen, as she spoke, and Cecil and Helen both laughed gaily.

'I will clap my hands! I always do clap my hands when I am pleased, only I should assuredly show off my little split glove, and ever since I split my little glove I have been employing all the art of which I am capable, in order to conceal that my little glove is split; so you see, my dear girls, I can't consistently clap my hands, can I? There goes the Byfield fly, and here comes the Wyndham carriage,' continued she; 'now if I could only get rid of that dear blessed man, my Colonel, what fun, what awful fun we might have! But how ever can I get rid of my Colonel?' and she looked for help first in Helen's face, and then in Cecil's, but bright and excited as both the girls' faces were, she found no help in either of them. At the same moment the Colonel joined their party.

'Leo, I am going to take these two young ladies home. What will you do?'

'Have you room for me, or shall I harass all the dresses too much?'

'We have room for you, of course; but it is a beautiful night, and not quite ten o'clock, and if you really want to speak to Haines about that dog, you might walk towards home and call in at his cottage, and I would pick you up either there or on the road, just as it might happen, as I return.'

'Very well, I will if you like, and then I can smoke my cigar, which I am quite ready for, I can assure you, after having been shut up here so long.'

So Colonel Wyndham settled the three ladies most comfortably in the carriage, putting cloaks and wraps about them, and after giving his orders

to the footman as to where he was to take them, bade the Miss Vauxes good-night, raised his hat from his head, and walked off in the direction of his own home, which, as we know, was on the other side of Byfield from Fernley Manor. Then Juliet clapped her hands in good earnest, notwithstanding her little split gloves, which split all the more as she clapped them, and sang out loudly and sweetly :—

And he's a jolly good fellow, my boys,
Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah.

After which she shook hands most warmly with her two joyous laughing companions, and then, putting her head out of the window, called to the footman, 'Take the turn to the right that leads up the hill from which we can see the sea, John !'

The menservants nudged each other with evident signs of surprise and amusement, but the coachman obeyed the orders given in contradiction to his master's; and the next moment the turn had been taken, and the horses were toiling up a steep hill.

It was a splendid night, the sky of that lovely cloudless dark, only to be seen in the winter; a mass of stars everywhere, shining softly, owing to the wonderful brightness of the moon. All the earth looked white in her radiance, and the white was beautiful.

Cecil seemed to herself to be in a dream. Life had suddenly become at once free and charming, and she did not at the moment recognise the possibility of falling back into the old trammels again. For the present hour life was worth living, and was everything that she could desire. Helen was too much amused and excited to be frightened at the audacity of their proceedings, which doubtless would appear to her in a juster light when morning came. They all three chatted with exuberant gaiety till they reached the top of the hill, where the view of the distant ocean burst upon them in all the glory that moonlight, and moonlight only, could give it. Then they held their breath, to look and admire.

'How beautiful!' they cried; 'how beautiful,'—and that was all.

The coachman, without waiting for further orders, turned his horses' heads homewards, and Juliet's pretty face was once more thrust through the carriage. 'Drive fast!' she cried; 'drive down the hill as fast as possible—faster, faster.'

The man obeyed, and the three girls sang 'God save the Queen' as they went. The pace quickened unmistakeably, and they quickened the time of their song to it.

But just as the words, 'Long to reign over us,' had been sounded with immense vigour and great rapidity, there was a shock—a stop—an earthquake, one of the horses was on the ground, the carriage ran forward on it, then toppled over, and the girls found themselves mixed together in a confused heap on one of its sides, which lay on the ground, with the other side uppermost.

(To be continued.)

A WINTER STORY.

VI.

The careful cold hath nipt my rugged rind,
 And in my face deep furrows eld hath pight;
 My heart besprent with hoary frost I find,
 And by mine eye the crow his claw doth wright:
 Delight is laid abed, and pleasure past,
 No sun now shines, clouds have all overcast.

Spenser.

It seemed as if it were fated that Rachel, whose sharp eyes kept watch over the whole establishment, should miss the visitors to the farm about this time. When Ronald ran in from the common one day, he found Ben standing in the yard, and with him a young man whose little fur cap had not yet grown sufficiently familiar to the boy to have lost the impression it gave him of a connection with tramps and gipsies. Ben was looking ill at ease, and every now and then cast a glance over his shoulders, as if with the hope that his wife would appear and release him from his difficulties by taking their burden on herself; but Rachel, who was rarely absent, had this morning gone off to the nearest town on a half-yearly expedition which served her during six following months, and he was obliged to content himself with throwing an extra slowness into his speech, and allowing his words to drop only after extreme deliberation. Still, as it was known to all the country round that it was easier to persuade Ben into a bargain than Rachel, who could never be brought only to look at the sound side, when Ronald came in, the man was urging his point in conciliatory terms.

'He's a good hos, master, take my word for't. There ain't a better in the country. He'll go till he drops, and do't all upon less livin' than ye'll find one hos in a hunderd'll put up wi'. Those greedy beasts as want to be stuffin' all day long, ain't worth their keep, half of 'em. This here's a different sort, and dirt cheap at fifteen pounds. Come, Mr. Cæsar.'

'It ain't no sort o' use, I tell you,' said Ben, slowly shaking his head.

'The master'll listen if ye speaks to 'im about he, ye know,' pursued the man. 'All the place knows as ye've a good eye for a hos. Let me bring 'im up to you. That's goin' neither here nor there. Ye ax the master whether he won't be agreeable for a bid if he finds 'im to his likin'. Come now, ye go in an' ax 'im.'

'It ain't no sort o' use,' repeated Ben, with the satisfaction of a man who has found a formula; 'an' I tell you, Jack Dykes,' he went on, eyeing his companion with great disfavour, 'ye may so well take yerself off for a' the good yer stoppin' 'll do.'

'Yer goin' to try, though,' said Jack, whistling easily, although Ben's size made him a formidable-looking antagonist. 'Yer goin' in to Mr. Oldfield, an' I'm a goin' to stop here till ye come back.'

Pertinacity is the most overpowering weapon you can use with some people, perhaps with the greater number of people; and Ben had been so accustomed for the sake of peace to yield to his wife, that his mind slipped into the habit as into its ordinary groove, and after he had stood still for a few minutes, rubbing his chin and going through a slow process of reflection, he walked off to the house. Jack Dykes, on his part, turned his back, and lounged up to one of the cattle-sheds, where Ronald followed him, not unwilling to enter into conversation, if only for the sake of novelty.

Jack's attentions were, however, of a nature to embarrass him greatly. He faced round, and fixing his eyes upon the boy, proceeded to pucker his countenance into a hundred contortions, each more ludicrous than the last, until Ronald, who had become very red between suspicion of ridicule and a sense of absurdity, could bear it no longer, and retreated after Ben, leaving Jack in possession of the yard.

When Ben came out, it was with a more than usually stolid air.

'I telled ye so, Jack Dykes,' he said in his deep husky voice. 'The master'll have nought to say to any o' yer lot. It ain't no good yer tellin'.'

The man changed his tone, and swore an oath, savagely.

'Yer a fine set, ye are, to stick yerselves above yer neighbors,' he said. 'There's tales told o' yer master as is noan so pleasant, for a' ye and he hold yer heads so high. So ye'll not make a bid for the hos? Well, I wish you a run o' better luck than comes nateral to you to make up for the disappointment.'

'What did he mean, Ben?' asked Ronald, who had come out again as the man went off.

'What he said, I s'pose,' said Ben, going off to fetch the cows, without any fret in his mind as to an under-current of threat having mingled with the words. Ronald, nevertheless, pondered over them with a little doubt, and repeated them to his uncle in the evening, choosing a moment when Rachel had left the room. Mr. Oldfield heard him quietly.

'People say more than they ever carry out—luckily for you and for me,' he said in his dreamy gentle voice, looking at Ronald.

'Ben didn't think he meant anything.'

'Very likely not. If I were you, I would not trouble myself about it, or think any more of Jack Dykes. It is not probable he will ever come again.'

Rachel, who had returned at this moment, stood still to hear what was going on, but she did not say anything herself, until she caught Ronald in the passage, rushing up to bed.

'There ye go, knockin' the house down. One 'ud think ye'd swallowed a steam-ngine when ye were a baby. What were Mr. Oldfield sayin' about Jack Dykes?'

'He came here to-day about a horse. You can ask Ben,' said Ronald, who had lost his awe of Rachel.

'She was very angry when she heard what had happened.

'Ben might ha' learnt by this time to look after hisself, without wantin' me to be at his elber always. Lettin' that feller loaf about the yard! I shouldn't wonder if he hadn't carried off the black hen that's the best layer for miles round. I'll niver go to th' market again, for I can't turn my back but what somethin' happens.'

'I saw the black hen going up to roost,' said Ronald.

'Well, then, ain't there a brown one?—an' a yellor? I'll lay a penny neither ye nor Ben could use yer eyes when there were any good to be got out of 'em.'

'Where does Jack Dykes live?' asked Ronald, unheeding.

'Over to the ponds in the woods. He's one o' the broom makers, an' a good thing it 'ud be for the country if they was all swept out of it wi' their own brooms. There's all the wickedness in the world goin' on there. Mind ye niver go pokin' near the place. Come, don't keep me here a' night, an' yer room in a litter as usual. I'll burn this rubbidge, I tell you I will!'

People threaten more than they carry out, luckily, as Mr. Oldfield had told Ronald, and as, indeed, he was beginning to find out by experience.

Rachel was a little disappointed the next morning that everything about the farm seemed the same as it had been before Jack Dykes's visit. She went out in the cold dim morning full of expectation, but the hens all answered to her call, and even her shrewd eyes could not discover any loss. Ben was not, however, suffered in consequence long to enjoy the elation in which he indulged upon the failure in his wife's prophecies, for Rachel was the more determined to convince him of the inferiority of his faculties, and made more opportunities than usual to prove herself in the right and him in the wrong.

Ronald, it has been said, lost much of his first awe of Rachel, as the weeks passed by. The sharpness of her manner towards him had not in any degree softened, but the healthy country life he led took from him much of his old timidity; he became more like other boys, her speeches ceased to wound when he found they were not followed by evil consequences; he left his possessions at her mercy without fear of the bonfire she perpetually threatened; above all, he was quick to discover that Rachel hailed with delight any symptoms of interest which Mr. Oldfield showed in his pursuits. They were few enough. A deeper gloom seemed to have settled on the master of the farm. Whatever efforts he made to throw himself into the details of the work going on about him were feverish and listless. At no time did that spring of interest show itself which alone quickens dull drudgery into cheery labour. His real life—the only one, at least, upon which he fell back with any alacrity—lay among his books, and it is probable their companionship did something to reconcile him to his task as teacher. Nevertheless, even their spell was chequered and uncertain, for not seldom when Ronald glanced up, believing his uncle to be absorbed in reading, he would see the book

closed, and in the furrows of the forehead, which alone was visible, would, child as he was, become aware of the workings of bitter thoughts.

Yet, although there was no perceptible lightening of the gloom; nay, since the day on which she had spoken of Miss Lyle, although it seemed to have closed round him with a yet more depressing influence, Rachel still hoped something from Ronald's coming to the farm. The tenderness which under an external coat of roughness warmed her heart, gave her a delicacy of perception which peeped out at unexpected angles, and was startling in its keenness. She knew that Mr. Oldfield's eye sometimes rested upon the boy with a look of almost wistful yearning. She could sometimes detect that he was listening when Roland was not in the room, and more than once that he was suffering a little uneasiness at some longer rambles than usual in the short wintry days. Disappointment had always followed these signs and a return to his ordinary indifference, but they had been there, and Rachel built upon them a tender hope of which no one would have ever suspected her. Indeed, regarding her as she usually appeared to the outer world, there was something touchingly pathetic in this care, this watchfulness, this patience, which never failed when her master was concerned—these mute endeavours to stir the torpor of his life.

It was very rarely indeed that Mr. Oldfield went beyond the garden or the nearest field. Occasionally, it is true, when the day was wild and stormy and near its end, some contradictory impulse or assertion of will led him out upon the common, and induced him to walk to the verge of a feature not yet mentioned, a great pond which spread itself almost to the size of a lake, and fretted itself into fierce waves under the wintry blast. Then he would not reach home before dark. But his was a temperament which naturally shrank from pain and discomfort, dreading them with an acuteness of prescience such as sturdier natures condemn or despise, and the shock that had saddened his life had painfully heightened this susceptibility.

For the last two years he had not entered the door of the old church. Until that time he had at least outwardly complied with the forms of religion, and it was a sore puzzle and grief to Rachel when he let these slip after the rest. For all the tender care she gave him did not help her to comprehend the complex workings of his character; a character, too, so diverse from her own, that the intelligence of an educated mind would not have greatly served her in the study, and only a more than ordinarily faithful affection could have taught her what she already knew. It was impossible for her to realize that the very reverence which Mr. Oldfield had once displayed, and which amply contented her, arose far more from the impressibility of his mind than from the depth of the impression. He had lived so long in an atmosphere imbued with it, and had breathed it so long, that he was himself unconscious how external it remained. When his life changed, old associations still worked with the mechanism of habit, but as, little by little, their strength became enfeebled—as, little by

little, one after the other fell away, these habits of devotion separated themselves like the rest. He did not thrust them from him, but passively suffered them to drop.

That a man—a man, above all, of such a nature as his, so rich, so delicate, so varied, with a keen delight in beauty, with instincts that at least inclined him towards things pure and excellent—should, for what was no more than a terrible mistake, suffer himself to sink into a torpid monotony, and think to live in awful solitude, apart even from his God, showed a weakness so pitiful, so sad, that Rachel's compassion fell immeasurably short of realizing it. She was not blind to the results, but she had no conception of the jar that was at work among the delicate strings. Thinking of him as he had been in old days, she never lost sight of the hope that at one time or another Mr. Oldfield would shake himself free from his present depression, and return to his original self. Sometimes we have the same dream of ourselves. The load once removed, the sorrow lightened, and we believe that to-day would be as yesterday. Vain dream, foolish belief. As well may we expect to become children again, as well may we hope to see the flowers that fell before the frost, as look to go back to what we were, or to put away from us our age of sorrow. There is no going back of body, soul, or spirit, in that road along which we are all travelling.

A YORK AND A LANCASTER ROSE

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'JANET'S HOME.'

CHAPTER IX.

OLD CLOTHES AND NEW.

'My dear child, you have made us all very anxious, and your mother quite ill.'

It was so contrary to all Professor Ingram's habits to have wasted half an hour in the middle of the day in watching from the window, and now to be running down the steps to a cab door without his hat, and with all the household looking on at him, that as soon as his first glance at Rose had assured him of her well-being, a tone of reproach coming into his first question, 'Where have you been, and what has kept you so long?' he continued a little sternly.

'Oh, Papa, I could not help it, indeed—at least I think I could not,' said poor Rose, a good deal frightened, and stammering a little.

'Well, get down and run into the house as quickly as you can, and set Mamma's mind at ease by showing her you are not hurt;' and Professor Ingram took Rose's hand and hurried her across the little bit of front garden and up the snowy steps, without vouchsafing a second glance at, or giving a second thought to, Teddy, whom, if he perceived at all, he

concluded to be an appendage to Anne, whom she was bound to look after.

‘Go out and pay and dismiss the cab,’ he said, as soon as he entered the house, to Packer, who, with most of the other members of the household, had on one pretext or another come out into the hall. There was a general rush at Rose. Mamma reached her first.

‘Oh, my darling, are not you almost frozen to death?’ she said, taking Rose in her arms and bestowing a warm kiss on each of her cold frost-bitten cheeks. ‘Yes, indeed, you are dreadfully cold; come to the fire at once, my darling.’ Not a word about her own anxiety or tedious watching at the window, though it had made her almost ill; not a note of reproach in her voice, only care for Rose’s comfort.

As Rose returned the kisses, she forgot all about Teddy for a moment in the rush of gratitude to dear Mamma for being so kind. Of course nobody else could be quite as kind under the circumstances but just Mamma. Luckily, her memory was refreshed in time by the clamour of children’s voices that reached her ears next.

‘What have you brought, Rose? What have you brought, Rose? Where are all the birthday presents?’

Where indeed?

‘Oh, Mamma, I had forgotten! I must run back to the cab to bring in what I have brought here.’

‘Not through the snow again, my dear. Surely, whatever it is you have brought us, Packer and Anne can manage to carry it into the house between them.’

‘Oh, but I don’t think he will follow them, he will be frightened. Do let me go and speak to him, please.’

‘A dog,’ shouted Lionel, clapping his hands in an ecstasy. ‘Hannah, Rose has brought us a dog for Lilly’s birthday present. What fun! I hope it is a big one, and very fierce; won’t nurse and the Fraulein be pleased and take to it—just!’

‘My dear, I hope you have not done anything of the kind,’ said Mrs. Ingram, beginning to be agitated. ‘A dog! even your papa objects to dogs in London; and of all things in the world I have the greatest horror of a dog going mad and biting the babies. Why, what is that noise? I do believe that the creature is beginning to howl, and that Packer is angry about it already. Oh, Rose, what have you done; what have you brought us?’

Rose meanwhile had opened the front door, which Packer had shut behind him, and disclosed to the eyes of the assembled household a vision of the cab still standing before the entrance gate, with Teddy on the top step violently kicking and striking Packer, who was trying somewhat roughly to lift him down, and vociferating in a loud voice that he would not go nowhere with nobody but the little lady. ‘Where was the little lady. Oh, oh! She had promised to take him back to Rosie and Sisters, and he would not go nowhere with nobody else. Oh, oh, oh!’

How Rose wished she had never left him, but had had the presence of mind to bring him into the house at once, before he had committed the enormity of kicking Packer before the whole household. If Lionel were sent to bed on Christmas Eve for that offence, what could be hoped for Teddy?

'Oh, Aunt Rachel,' she said, turning in despair for support to her aunt, who was looking on in as much surprise as anybody else, 'Don't you know him? It's Teddy Marshall; the boy who sat by the fire at the Home one Saturday night. Oh, do say that you know him.'

'My dear,' answered Aunt Rachel, 'I can't undertake to identify every little boy you may have seen. However, he may possibly know me by sight. I will go and see.'

Teddy subsided at once, either at the sight of Aunt Rachel's face or the sound of her voice, and the next moment the whole party were assembled inside the hall with the door shut. Teddy stood in the middle of a circle of curious observers on the front door mat, which Anne ostentatiously thrust under his dirty feet the instant he entered; and Rose drew near him, feeling that it devolved on her to account for so strange an apparition being there, and hoping so vehemently to be able to persuade them all to be kind to Teddy, that for a moment her throat ached too much for her to bring out a word.

In the silence, Packer had the first word, addressed to Professor Ingram, who, at the second opening of the front door, had turned back from his study, which he had just reached, to inquire what was the matter.

'As far as I understand what 'as 'appened, sir,' Packer began, respectfully, 'Miss Hingram 'as been robbed of some purchases she made this morning by an old woman who snatched the parcels out of her 'ands, while this little boy clung to 'er and 'eld 'er fast. The woman ran off with the goods, and left the boy behind 'er. A policeman who came up very properly proposed to take the child to the police station and keep 'im safe there till some one came to claim 'im, which would most likely 'ave led to the discovery of the perpetrators of the theft, sir; but Miss Hingram' (with a look of disgust at Rose) 'preferred to bring the boy 'ere, sir; and that's 'im, sir, on the door mat.'

'Oh, Packer,' cried Rose, with tears in her eyes, 'how can you say such things? She did not snatch—nobody snatched—and Teddy Marshall had nothing at all to do with it.'

'Hindeed, Miss! 'ad not he?' in a civil tone of profound incredulity. 'But,' turning to Professor Ingram, 'that is what 'as 'appened, sir, you'll find, as far as can be made out.'

'Master Willie,' struck in Nurse in a shrill voice, 'come and stand by me this instant, sir; I won't 'ave you touch that little boy on the door mat. Come quite out of the way, I tell you, to the other side of the 'all. And you, too, Miss Tiny. There's no saying what he mayn't have got about 'im, coming out of places like that.'

'Indeed, you need not be frightened, Nurse,' cried Rose, eagerly. 'He

can't be so very dirty; for I know he is always washed on Saturday nights, and this is only Tuesday—now, ain't you, Teddy,' she added, courageously putting her hand on Teddy's capless head to raise his face to view: a movement which called out an indignant 'Well! Miss Rose, I never——' from Nurse, and a visible shudder from Mrs. Ingram, but had no effect whatever on Teddy, who, having seized a flap of Rose's outdoor jacket, was steadily engaged in twisting off one of its bright buttons, sending curious glances from the corners of his eyes at other curiosities in the hall meanwhile.

'I thought it as well to tell the cabman to wait a few minutes, sir,' persisted Packer, still ignoring everybody present but Professor Ingram. 'I thought it might be convenient if you wished to 'ave the child taken at once to the nearest police station, as was proposed at first, sir, and as is the most likely way of restoring 'im to 'is own friends.'

'Mamma, Mamma,' cried Rose, in an agony. 'He is a great deal colder than I am. Do look at his blue hands, and his red toes sticking out of his shoes, and he is dreadfully afraid of policemen, and I don't suppose he has had anything to eat for hours; and he is Teddy Marshall, indeed. His mother is ill in the hospital Aunt Rachel visits. Papa, do feel how dreadfully cold his poor little blue hand is, if you ain't afraid of him, like Paacker.'

Professor Ingram could not help smiling at this side-thrust at Packer, and, coming forward, actually did take the blue hand that was not busied on Rose's button in his. 'Poor wee chap,' he said, looking at Teddy kindly. 'My dear,' turning to Mrs. Ingram, 'can't the little lad, whether he is a thief or not, be taken down into the kitchen, and be warmed and fed, while we listen to Rose's explanation, and decide what to do with him?'

'The kitchen, my dear! did you say the kitchen?' said Mrs. Ingram, looking flurried; 'but we were going to have an early dinner for Grand-mamma and Mrs. Fanshawe; and Cook will be dishing up now, and she *never* allows any strange person to come into the kitchen while she is dishing up. She would never get over it if I proposed such a thing to her.'

'Then Packer had better call the cab,' said the Professor, a little impatiently. 'If there is no single place in this house where a poor child can be taken, for I suppose of course that you would object to his going into the nursery, I will drive with him myself to the ragged school in West Street; he will be taken in there and kindly treated till we can find his friends.'

'And if it really is Teddy Marshall, as Rose supposes,' put in Aunt Rachel, 'there will be no difficulty in finding his friends. I can take him back to them any moment you like.'

'But you are both in such a hurry,' said Mrs. Ingram plaintively. 'I am sure I am the last person who would wish to turn a dear little child out of the house cold and hungry; only Papa said the kitchen, and I

know that is impossible ; and I was thinking of my own room. Why, the poor little fellow must be about the same age as Willie ; and Rose says his mother is ill, and I can see that he has a dreadful broken chilblain on one foot, that Nurse had better attend to directly. She remembers what the doctor ordered for Lionel when he had a broken chilblain, the first year he went to school. A small liqueur glass of port wine, twice a day, was one of the prescriptions. I'm sure Packer can bring the wine whilst Nurse bathes and dresses the foot ; or stay' (seeing looks of strong disapprobation on the faces of the two potentates) 'perhaps I had better see to it all myself. There is a good fire in my room, Rachel ; and I will take the child there out of the way of the children, for fear of infection, and we will bathe him and dress him in some of Willie's old clothes ; and then, perhaps, it might be safe to let him wait in the nursery till his friends can be told where he is, and come for him.'

'So long as you don't rush into the opposite extreme, and tire yourself to death,' said Professor Ingram, a little doubtfully.

'Let us hear Rose's account, and let her tell us what she knows about the child,' suggested the elder Mrs. Ingram.

'Or let me question him and try what I can make out,' said Aunt Rachel, kneeling down before Teddy, and turning up his face with her finger so as to give everyone a full view. 'Now, my little man, tell us who you are, and whom you belong to.'

'I'm Teddy Marshall, and I belongs to Rosie, and I wants to go back to her, I do.' (Somewhat sulkily).

'And who is this ?' pointing to Rose Ingram.

Teddy, briskly : 'It's the young lady as 'as a bag at 'ome, and as give our Rosie a bright penny for me not to stand on my 'ed.'

'Oh, Teddy, have you got it with you ?' cried Rose. 'Do show it them if you have, and they'll believe us. Mamma and Nurse and everybody knows my bright penny.'

The request had a peculiar effect on Teddy. For a moment he seemed to be choking ; and then there appeared from some recess in his cheek, or under his tongue, a penny—not very bright, certainly, now, but sufficiently unworn to show that it had been bright a little while ago. He wiped it on his dingy pinafore, and handed it to Rose with a grin. 'I would not let 'er 'ave it. She got my comforter and my cap ; but I would not let 'er 'ave my bright penny not for anything, I wouldn't, so I hid it quiet, as Big Ben—he taught me 'ow.'

'I wish you would teach me how,' cried Lionel rapturously ; 'it's as good a conjuring trick as I ever saw in all my life. I just should like to know how to talk and scream with a penny in my mouth as well as you did.'

'But you'll give me back my penny, won't you ?' said Teddy, distrustfully eyeing the penny as it passed from Rose's hand to one and another of the children's with exclamations of 'Yes, it is Rose's bright penny ;

that is where Lilly scratched it with a pin the first day Rose had it.' 'Oh, and there's where Lionel tried to burn a hole in it with a red-hot knitting needle!' 'Yes, Nurse! yes, Mamma! it is Rose's bright penny.'

'Though how the identification of the penny suffices for the identification of the boy I don't yet understand,' observed Professor Ingram.

'It is all growing very clear to me, however,' said Aunt Rachel; 'for I believe I was present when the penny was given away. This little boy's sister Rose must be the girl that our Rose kissed on the steps of the Home one Saturday night when she was there with me. Is it not so, Rose? you told me she was your namesake then, I remember. But how in the world does the little fellow come to be here under your charge to-day, miles and miles from his own home?'

'He says he ran away from his sisters going to school this morning, and an old woman called Turner got hold of him and stole some of his clothes, and took him out begging with her. They came to the Pantheon, and Teddy saw me, and ran to me and asked me to take care of him and bring him back to his Rosie. I could not have let the bad old woman have him—could I, Aunt Rachel? could I, Mamma? She tried to drag him away from me, and I put down my parcels, all the things I had bought at the Pantheon with your money, Papa, on the steps or somewhere, I don't quite know what I did with them. I did not think of them, I could only think of holding Teddy fast, that the dreadful woman might not drag him away. Papa, was it right or was it wrong?' And Rose looked up anxiously into her father's face, with her eyes again rapidly filling with tears.

'Quite right, my dear child,' he said, stooping down and kissing her tenderly on the forehead as he spoke; 'quite right to cling at any cost to a more helpless creature than yourself who appeals to you for protection. Go on as you have begun to-day, Rose, having courage to be helpful in spite of appearances, and you will be such a woman as I should like you to be.'

The Professor spoke loud, and everybody in the hall heard him—Grandmamma, and Packer, and Nurse, and old Mrs. Fanshawe, and Lucy. As Rose felt the colour rush over her face for the moment, she did not know whether this was the happiest or the very hardest incident of the morning. Perhaps Lucy Fanshawe would make a joke afterwards of her father's grave speech, and how should she bear that? She could not help turning round to look at Lucy, who had pushed her way from behind her grandmamma to the front row since the exhibition of the bright penny. But though the eyes that met hers were very bright, it was not, as usual, with mockery and laughter. Rose could hardly believe the evidence of her own. Could it be the moisture in them that made her fancy that Lucy's eyes were full of tears?

'It strikes me,' said Aunt Rachel, 'that we ought not to waste any more time in talking. Something should be done at once about——'

‘Getting the dear child whom Rose has saved something to eat, and something warm and clean to wear,’ interrupted Mrs. Ingram eagerly.

‘Yes, and what is perhaps of more consequence, about letting his mother know what has become of him. If he has been missing since morning, she is no doubt in great anxiety, and she is very ill.’

‘Poor thing, she must be in an agony,’ exclaimed Mrs. Ingram. ‘I should like to go and tell her myself that her child is safe. I shan’t have a happy moment till she knows. How can we reach her quickest, Rachel?’

‘We must send a telegram to the hospital—that cab of Packer’s—it really is fortunate he did not let it drive away, for the snow is falling so thickly, the streets may be impassable in another hour. I will drive to the telegraph office and send a message to Mother Ursula that will make them happy about Teddy, and you had better, all of you, including Teddy, go to dinner, for I am afraid Grandmamma and Mrs. Fanshawe must be feeling very faint.’

Professor Ingram offered to go with Aunt Rachel, and the party in the hall began to disperse.

It was certainly very kind of Grandmamma, and of old Mrs. Fanshawe, not to make any remark on the long delay of dinner, or even to look disturbed about it in the very least, for neither of the old ladies was accustomed to have her convenience set aside. The younger Mrs. Ingram was beginning to be remorseful on their account, and to wonder again how she should dispose of Teddy, when Nurse, on whom the production of Rose’s bright penny had made a great impression, came forward to the rescue. She said, Mrs. Ingram had a deal better leave it all to her, and order dinner to be brought up into the schoolroom at once. She would see after the poor little boy’s chilblain. Of course he was not a thief. *She* never would believe that of him, whatever anybody else did, now she had seen how carefully he had kept Miss Rose’s penny, not spending it in sweet rubbish, as all the children she had ever known would have done, except dear Master Claude when he was in the nursery. And as for his head, now she came to look close at it, Nurse pronounced that it was not so very much amiss but that a wash and a comb might make it safe for even Master Willie with his long curls to come near. The harangue ended with a benevolent glance towards Teddy, and an appeal in Nurse’s most coaxing nursery tone.

‘Come away then with me, little dear, and he shall have a nice piece of hot roast chicken by and bye.’

Hot roast chicken, however, did not appeal to any experience of Teddy’s, and in spite of all Nurse’s blandishments he stuck to his first resolution, of not going nowhere with nobody but the little lady. The point had to be yielded at last, and Rose was allowed to take Teddy by the hand and lead him upstairs to coax him into submitting to some preliminary washing and dressing arrangements, and to provide him with a plate of chicken and mashed potato, with promise of sweet pudding to follow, before she went herself to the day nursery to have her dress

changed for the early dinner, now by no means early. Other people had nearly finished their meal when she appeared, but there was a place reserved for her between Grandmamma and Mrs. Fanshawe, who was disposed to pity her a great deal more than necessary for her long fast. It was a little embarrassing, perhaps, for Mrs. Fanshawe would talk to Grandmamma across Rose, all the time she was eating her dinner, about how very much she admired young people who were kind to the poor; and Grandmamma Ingram, who held strong opinions on the unadvisability of young people being made much of under any pretext, gave cut-the-matter-short answers in a dry tone, accompanied by injunctions to Rose to finish her chicken as quickly as possible, and not keep everybody waiting; which made Rose fear she was in disgrace in that quarter. That she was not became apparent, however, when dessert was put upon the table, for while everybody was drinking Lilly's health, Grandmamma took an opportunity of saying that though she disapproved of the extravagantly expensive presents it was now the fashion to give children at Christmas and the New Year, and though she had meant to restrict herself to one of her usual useful presents on birthdays, of a new thimble or pair of scissors to a girl, or clasp-knife to a boy; she should this year, to show her approval of Rose's behaviour to Teddy, and to spare dear little Lilly and the other children disappointment, present the schoolroom party with exactly the same gifts as would have been received if Rose had brought her purchases back from the Pantheon instead of Teddy. Rose was called on to give an exact account of the contents of the parcels somebody ran off with, and when Grandmamma heard of the aquarium, and the little piano, and the packets of candy, she could not help holding up her hands with astonishment, and shaking her head disapprovingly at Papa, who, though he could not find time to join the early dinner party, had just looked into the schoolroom at that moment to drink Lilly's good health, and take Grandmamma and Aunt Rachel downstairs into the drawing-room. It led to a talk between Grandmamma and Aunt Rachel and Papa, about the very different sort of toys they used to have when they were young, and to anecdotes of Papa's and Aunt Rachel's childhood, which delighted Rose, and made her wonder how it was she had thought Papa such a very grave formidable person, as she had certainly considered him a few weeks ago. Lilly was told to thank everybody for drinking her health, and Papa pretended to pity her very much for having to submit to such an ordeal, and said that to make up for it she might choose her own amusement for all the rest of the evening. Lilly did not take a moment to think, but decided at once that nothing would amuse her so much as to have Teddy to sit by her at dessert, and to take him up into the nursery afterwards and show him all the toys. Papa gave his consent before Mamma had time to think of fears or objections, and Lionel and Lucy Fanshawe darted out of the room together to bring Teddy in. They were some time absent, and a great deal of noise and giggling was heard in the passage. Maggie went to the door to ascertain what was going on, and

brought back word that Teddy was teaching Lionel to walk on his head, and that they were preparing to come into the room as two coach wheels, a little one and a big one. Rose had some qualms of conscience as to whether her namesake would approve of Teddy's receiving such encouragement in his bad habits at their house, but the rest of the party applauded the performance quite rapturously when it came off, and old Mrs. Fanshawe laughed till the tears ran down her cheeks, and would have given Teddy a shilling on the spot, but Aunt Rachel would not let her. Teddy looked as pretty as Clara now that Nurse had combed and brushed his thick curly hair into soft dark rings all round his head, and washed his face till the pink and white showed. There was a great deal of white and a very little pink (just where the fire had touched the cheeks) in the odd, shrewd little face; and Grandmamma, as she pinched Teddy's thin cheeks, said she was sure that his mother did not know how to make porridge, but fed her children, as did all the feckless southern poor women, on dry cold bread and milkless tea. Mamma being disposed to excuse the mother, of whose anxiety she was constantly thinking, questioned Rose as the only person able to give information, and while Teddy sat on Mamma's knee absorbed in almonds and raisins, Rose related what she knew of the history of the family as she had gathered it from her namesake on the stairs. She was not prepared for its making such an impression on her mother as she saw it did.

'Five children and a baby, did you say, my dear, and the mother obliged to separate herself from her little ones since November, and the father not the sort of man she can rely on to protect them in her absence! Ah, that is what I pity the poor mother for most heartily, to be weak and ill herself, and not to be able to look to her husband for support.' And the younger Mrs. Ingram glanced towards the Professor as she spoke, who was just at the moment leaving the room with Grandmamma leaning on his arm. 'My dear, I can't imagine how she bears her life. I *do* pity her, poor thing; I can quite see the sort of person she is, brought up in a quiet country place like Monkton perhaps, where I lived till I married, and then having to come into the whirl of London. Ah, hers must indeed be a life of trial! And I think you said that one of the children died after they came to live in London?'

'Yes, Harry; he was the eldest, older than Rose.'

'I wonder whether it was of scarlet fever,' said Mrs. Ingram, thoughtfully; and then Rose remembered to have heard that a little brother of her own had died of scarlet fever the year after her father and mother came to live in London, and that Mamma's great dread of infection, and nervous horror of any one of the children going into a strange house, dated from that loss. The other children had slipped away to the play-room while Mamma and Rose talked, and now a deputation returned to say that a game of General Post was now going on in the nursery, and that Rose's presence and Teddy's were called for.

'Yes, go my dear,' Mamma said, kissing Rose affectionately; 'we have

had a very nice talk together, and I am glad to know all about the Marshalls. I should perhaps have been nervous if I had known about your going into that lodging-house at the time, but I begin to think I ought to put aside my fears sometimes. If you had not made friends with Teddy he would not have run to you to-day, and that other mother might now be suffering such an agony of anxiety as I cannot bear to think of.'

Teddy was a great success in the nursery, and did more to make the holiday afternoon pass brilliantly than could have been effected by the little piano or the packet of sweetmeats. He was not in the least shy, and though his ill luck came out conspicuously in all the games, and he was always the one to be caught, or to be thrown down, if there was a chance of anyone's being thrown down, and though he managed, in spite of all Nurse's precautions, to fall foul of the nursery fire-guard, in blind man's buff, and bruise his forehead against its hard edge, he took his misfortunes as such capital jokes, and was so rapturously merry over everything that happened, that all the children were enchanted with him, and declared if only they might keep Teddy always they would not care to have an aquarium or any other pet animal.

'Rose was right after all,' they said; 'she had brought a capital play-thing and pet home with her, if only they might have him for their own.'

Lucy Fanshawe was the most forward of all in paying attention to Teddy, and won Rose's heart over again by her good nature. When she and Rose were standing out of a game, with nothing particular to do for a few minutes, they fell into conversation that took a graver turn than was usual with Lucy Fanshawe.

'You looked at me when your papa kissed you in the hall,' Lucy began. 'You thought I should laugh, I know, and all the time I was so nearly crying; I would not have had anyone see me but you for all the world.'

'But why?' asked Rose.

'I don't mind telling you, because I believe you are really good-natured, and would not remind one of things at wrong times. I should not like often to be reminded of this, because it really is so doleful. Did I ever tell you anything about my papa?'

'No; but I know that you remember him. I suppose when you heard my papa speak so kindly to me, it brought the thought of yours back, and hurt you. Was that it?'

'It is worse than that. What your papa said to you put me in mind of something very different that my papa once said to me. It was when he was ill, just a month before he died, but of course I did not know he was going to die. I had brought him up a pudding from the kitchen. I always liked to wait on him. I was not so bad as ever to forget anything I was told I might do for him himself. But that day he could not eat his pudding; he took a mouthful, and smiled at me, and said it was very good, but that it hurt him too much to swallow, and that it was

a pity such a delicious pudding should be wasted on a person who could not enjoy it; and that he should like me to take it just as it was, nice and hot, to a little boy in the village who had hurt his foot badly, and who lived close to the rectory gate. I put on my hat to go, but at the house door I met some little friends of mine who had brought me a tame rabbit for a present. I just put the dish down on the doorstep while I looked at the rabbit, and then we talked and played with it for a few minutes, and at last went into the orchard to find a place to keep it in, and the time slipped on till nearly tea-time: you know how time does slip on without one's perceiving when anything nice is going on. When my friends left me, I went back to the front of the house, and found that a strange dog had got into the garden, and knocked the dish over and eaten all the custard pudding. When I went to see papa the last thing that night, he asked me how little Willie Brown had liked his pudding; and when I told him just what had happened, he looked gravely at me, and said, "I am disappointed, Lucy darling." The worst of it all is, that I never had an opportunity of talking to papa or being alone with him after that day. He was taken much worse in the night, and Grandmamma and Aunt Mary came to be with him, and they would hardly let me stay five minutes in the room, or speak a word to papa; they pretended it was bad for him and me, and never would let me have a chance of waiting on him; they took all that on themselves. You would not believe how often I think about it, Rose; and when I look out for amusement and make myself giddy, it generally is just to keep myself from getting quite too mopy. There seems so little use in my taking pains with lessons or things now, or trying to improve myself in any way, for Grandmamma always says she cares for nothing hardly but my keeping strong and well; and whatever I do, and whatever pains I take, I shall never get a word from papa that will undo that "I am disappointed, Lucy darling." Nothing I do can please *him* now.'

'But are you sure?' said Rose, hesitatingly. 'Don't you think that he knows about you in some way? If you were really trying, I think he would know: your guardian angel might tell him about you.'

'But I heard Aunt Mary say the other day that it was all nonsense about guardian angels, and that nobody thought about them now.'

'I think Aunt Rachel does. I will ask her to tell me what she really thinks.'

'I wish you would, and tell me,' said Lucy, eagerly. 'If I had anyone to look after, or if I thought it signified very much to anyone what I did, it would make such a difference. Grandmamma is very kind, but then she fidgets so about health and nothing else, and I can see I am a great plague to her, Aunt Mary is always telling me so. I thought once that you were going to be very fond of me, Rose, but you left off.'

Rose was called away to take part in a game before she had had time for half the protestations and promises that came to her lips, and just as she was released Aunt Rachel appeared in the play-room to say that

Stephen had come with the carriage to take grandmamma and herself back to Russell Square, and that as Stephen had had the horses roughed and reported that the streets were now passable, Grandmamma proposed to take Teddy and Rose in the carriage with them. She herself would get out at her own house, but the rest of the party were to be driven to the Home. Rose would thus have the pleasure of restoring Teddy to his friends herself, and would afterwards return with Aunt Rachel to Russell Square for the night. The next morning Grandmamma promised to take her to the Pantheon, to buy another aquarium, and hoped to bring her back by twelve o'clock in possession of all her purchases. If Rose had not been going too, there would certainly have been a great scene with Teddy, before he could have been got out of the play-room, for he was in no sort of a hurry to leave his comfortable quarters, and the play-mates who were making such a fuss over him. However, when he saw Rose putting on her hat, his anxiety to be restored to his Rosie revived, and he declared himself ready to abide by his first resolution, and 'go with the little lady and nobody else.'

Nurse, who certainly was, as Mrs. Ingram always said, a wonderful woman, able to turn her hand to anything in an emergency, and capable of performing feats that trenched upon magic, had contrived (nobody knew how or when) to have Teddy's old clothes not only washed and ironed, but substantially mended, and made up into a neat bundle, with sundry additional old socks and flannels of Master Willie's, for Teddy to take home with him; the suit he was wearing now being obviously only fit for gala occasions in the 'Models.'

While Teddy was being fitted with a cap of Willie's and a comforter, to replace those the old woman stole, a frantic overhauling and tumbling about of toys went on at the toy cupboard; all the nursery children down to Tiny being extremely anxious to present Teddy with something to take away with him, and determined to have his own opinion as to what he preferred. Nurse's efforts to keep his head still while she fitted the cap were constantly rendered ineffectual by appeals in shrill voices of: 'Would you like to take this drum and fife, Teddy dear?' or, 'Don't you think you had better take this little old soldier as well as the baggage waggon? You may if you like.'

Teddy was not disposed to refuse anything, and his taste when an alternative was put before him was invariably the most bulky article; so that but for Aunt Rachel's interference, Grandmamma would have run the risk of being suffocated in the carriage under a mountain of toys.

There were limits to Stephen's patience when he was required to keep the horses standing on a cold day, and at last Packer himself toiled up to the height of the nursery with a remonstrance: 'The carriage could wait no longer, and would have to drive off without Miss Rose if she was not ready.'

That was how Packer put it; he did not choose to have it supposed that old Mrs. Ingram, and the horses, and Stephen, were waiting all this time for Teddy Marshall and his toys.

In this extremity a hasty selection had to be made. Teddy secured a headless wooden horse under one arm and a musical cart under the other, and Willie ran after him with the drum and fife and the little old soldier, while Rose followed in the rear with the bundle of clothes, and a flaxen-haired doll in a pink silk dress that Lilly made up her mind to part with at the very last minute, and thrust into Rose's arms with a whispered message that it was to be given with her love to Clara. This put it into Rose's head to stop for an instant before her own little book-case in the corner: since so many presents were flying about, her namesake must have something, something she would really like—'The Book of Golden Deeds.' How Rosie would like that, and the stories were not long enough to take up too much of her time, or make her forget things. Rose slipped it out of its place and into her pocket just as Aunt Rachel called back to her to make haste; and as Grandmamma actually was waiting in the hall, they got into the carriage without more delay, and with only a few objections on Grandmamma's part to the unreasonable number of packages that had to be stowed in.

CHAPTER X.

When Rose got within a few paces of the iron gate, she saw to her surprise, Reuben, the telegraph boy, coming down the step to the house.

was not a usual time for him to be in that neighbourhood, and there was something in his face that made her set off running. He too began to run, either to meet her or because he had already delayed a little on his errand. As they passed each other he drew up for a quarter of a minute to nod and say, 'It's all right; I brought a telegram. They'll tell you within.' And when Rose had stumbled up the steps, panting and breathless, she saw Mother Ursula in the reception-room, with a paper in her hand.

'Oh, mother!' she cried out; 'is it about Teddy? Is it to say where he is, and that he is safe?'

'Yes, my poor child,' said Mother Ursula, kindly. 'Here is a message from Miss Ingram, and it seems she has Teddy in her safe keeping. Her little niece found him wandering about in Oxford Street, and took him to her own home, and they will bring him back to-night, if possible, if not, early to-morrow morning. Now it is just four o'clock, and your mother is growing anxious; take the telegram in your hand, Rose, and go and tell her about it yourself.'

Rose ran up with a very joyful face to her mother's bedside. The telegram, however, was not quite the same thing to poor Mrs. Marshall as the sight of Teddy himself; and it was very difficult at first for Rose to make her understand all that had happened, and convince her that all was right. There was enough distress to show Rose how great her agony would have been if she had had to hear of Teddy's long absence from home that snowy day, and no news of his whereabouts could have been

given to her. Mother Ursula, however, was at hand to soothe and explain, and exercise a little wise authority over her nervous patient ; and in a little while Mrs. Marshall was satisfied, and grew calm, and was able to enjoy the privilege of keeping her children with her till tea-time. Even after that hour Rosie was allowed to remain sitting like a mouse by her mother's side, holding her hand, and helping her to listen for the sound of carriage wheels, and for rings at the bell. Sometimes Mrs. Marshall got into tolerable spirits, and laughed a little over the notion of their expecting Teddy to come home in a carriage and pair ; and sometimes she relapsed into fears, or into being doleful over the shame of a child of hers being seen in such an untidy state as Teddy was sure to have put himself into. Miss Ingram would never know what a pretty little chap he was when he was clean, nor how like he could look to Harry in the Sunday suit of long ago, that would not have been in rags if Mrs. Marshall's poor weak fingers could have worked to keep it together. At last—for after all the carriage wheels made no noise in the snow—the ward door opened, and Rose Ingram appeared at the opening, leading in Teddy clean and spruce, and rosier, and altogether in better case than he had ever looked since they came to live in London. There must have been a good deal of agitation in Mrs. Marshall's mind, for when at the joyful sight she sprang up in bed, and held out her arms, it was ' Harry ! Harry ! ' she called out, instead of Teddy. The sight of the outstretched arms was, however, quite enough to set Teddy tearing down the ward to get into them ; and a great rapture of hugging and kissing, and a little crying on Mrs. Marshall's part, followed. The sight of a new suit of clothes, and a loving inspection of the mended old ones, proved of great service to Mrs. Marshall in recalling her thoughts to practical matters, and giving a happy turn to her excitement. While Rose Marshall turned Teddy round and round that his mother lying back exhausted on her pillow might inspect every thread of his new attire ; and while the two of them shook out the contents of the bundle, and exchanged looks of congratulation over every patch, and settled that one of the extra flannel petticoats Nurse Lewis had put in should be for Susie, and that Polly might wear one of the pairs of socks, though they would be too large for her ; Rose Ingram stood aside, looking on, and getting a good many new ideas into her head.

It may perhaps seem strange that some of them solved for her a little difficulty in her school work that had been troubling her more or less for a week past. The Professor of the literature class she attended had desired his pupils to write a theme on ' money,' and Rose had been in despair about what she should say on such a dry topic. It was odd to come to a hospital to get help to do one's lessons, but here quite unsought for the help was ; for thoughts came pouring into her mind so fast that her only fear was she should never be able to crowd them all into her paper, or to find good enough words to put them into, so as to make them look as clear to other people as they did to her just now. She saw, what the Professor

had tried to explain and she had not entered into before, that pounds and shillings and pence are only signs, tokens that have meant very different things at different times, and that now mean different things to different people. Why, only this morning she had had two pieces of gold in her hand, which only meant to her some toys that would for a few weeks give her a little extra amusement to four or five children, who were already busy and happy enough, and to-night she was learning what that sum of money would have meant to the sick woman on the bed there. Should she try to put some of these quick crowding thoughts into the history of a shilling or a sovereign instead of keeping to the usual form of theme which she never could make anything but dull and patchy? The idea was so pleasant that Rose could not help giving a skip across the room to welcome it, and then Mrs. Marshall caught sight of her and turned from the mended clothes to take her by the hand and pour out such thanks and blessings as drove for the time everything but embarrassment and shyness out of Rose's head. She had not done anything to deserve such thanks; they made her feel ashamed and humbled, and yet it was not a painful shame, there was a glow of joy and of thankfulness underneath that brought tears, sweet not bitter tears into her eyes. She understood this feeling of thankfulness and to whom it was due a little later in the evening when Teddy had been carried off to show him to Blind Ben and his father, and to put him to bed in the 'Models' and the White Rose and she sat on the staircase together for a few minutes before they parted. Rose Marshall gave her the history of her day then, and told her of her thoughts in the church, and the verse of the hymn that had comforted her, and they compared notes on what they had each been doing.

'You see the Good Shepherd *did* take care of Teddy,' Rose Marshall said, 'better even than I dared to hope. He took him to you and made you so kind to him. Oh, I am glad it was you.'

That was the thought that stayed with Rose Ingram till long after she was in bed at Grandmamma's house, and the light in her room had been put out. The Good Shepherd had brought Teddy to her, He had let her do a little bit of work for Him that day, trusted her for a little while with the care of one of His lambs. It was a joyful beautiful thought, but it had a side of awe to it too. If she had not been ready, if work should come again, and through cowardice, or selfishness or unreadiness of any kind, she should turn away from it and disappoint Him. The thought of His watchfulness over all, of every opportunity, every call, small as well as great, to kindness and self-denial being directly of His sending, made life very full of hope and joy indeed—but awful too. Rose found fit expression at last for the great need of Divine help, which these thoughts brought home to her in the words of a collect which she had learned by heart a few Sundays before without paying much attention to its meaning, but which she now found supplied her with exactly what she wanted to say:—'Lord, we beseech Thee mercifully to receive the prayers of thy people that call upon Thee, and grant that they may both perceive and know

what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

When Rose Ingram came back the next morning all the holiday aspect of things had left the house, lessons and German speaking were going on in the school-room, and as the music-master was expected in five minutes, the Fräulein directed her to go upstairs at once and take off her out-door things, and be ready to take the first lesson. The aquarium had been left downstairs, and was not (so the Fräulein decreed) to be seen by the children till after lesson hours.

Rose was very glad to find Maggie seated by the nursery fire, excused from attendance in the school-room on account of her sore throat. It was a real relief, while throwing off her jacket and unlacing her boots, to be able to pour out to Maggie some of the news with which she was overflowing.

'It was even nicer than I expected, Maggie,' she began as fast as the words could be brought out. 'You'll hardly believe it, but I took Teddy up to his mother myself in the ward—such a pale woman—but you should have seen how delighted she was with Teddy's new—I mean with Willie's old clothes. I should not have thought that old clothes could possibly have made anyone so happy; and then she undid the bundle and counted the socks over and over again, and then lay back on her pillow smiling at them, and she spied out Nurse's patches in a minute, and said that many and many a night she had lain there thinking of the patches that needed to be put into those clothes of Teddy's, and that Nurse had done just exactly what she would have done herself, if her poor weak hands would have let her; for what she cares for above everything, she says, is to keep her children decent. I really think she made more fuss over the patches in the real old clothes than over the old new ones. She said they had been such good wearing clothes, and that she had bought them in the country for Harry, and made them up again herself for Teddy before she began to be ill, and it had so gone to her heart to think they were being frittered away for want of mending, she had hardly known how to bear it. I must tell all that to Nurse. "Frittered away" is just one of Nurse's own words, isn't it? I stayed talking to Mrs. Marshall ever so long, and I saw the little sick children in their cots all round the room.'

'And you slept at Grandmamma's?'

'Yes, in our favourite Redroom, with a fire so comfortable, and Grandmamma so kind. But, oh! the best part is to come. Do you know that this is S. Mathias's day?'

'Well, what then? what does that signify?'

'Yes, I know *we* don't make any difference, but some people do. I went with Aunt Rachel this morning to Rose's school, and after a little bit of lessons, all the children went to church, and they sang such a beautiful hymn marching round the church all together. It began—

'Daily, daily sing the praises
Of the city God hath made'—

but I only remember the chorus perfectly, because we sang that over and over, and the preacher spoke about it in his sermon, and I have been thinking it over ever since to tell to Lucy Fanshawe. I think she will like it as much as I do.'

'Lucy Fanshawe! the idea of her liking anything in a sermon. Why, Rose, are you going to change again and have her for your friend? Florence will call you fickle indeed if you do.'

'Never mind that now. I want to tell you about the sermon quick, for fear I should forget it, and I have only time to talk while I unlace this last boot and fold my jacket. The verse in the hymn the preacher talked about was—

'O that I had wings of angels
Here to spread and heavenward fly :
I would seek the gates of Zion,
Far beyond the starry sky.'

He said the children always liked singing those words, and marching round the church on Saints' days, but he wanted them to think what they meant when they wished to have wings of angels. He said we ought to think about the Saints pointing the way, and our guardian angels at our sides (that is what I want to tell Lucy Fanshawe), but that it would not do to be idly making pictures, and only singing about having wings; we must do the kind of things that make our wings of angels grow, and prepare us to "heavenward fly," and he said these things were little daily duties; saying our prayers, and attending at church, and conquering our faults, such as crossness, and greediness, and idleness. He said that every real prayer, and every victory over a fault, and every good piece of work done for love of God, was like a new feather in our wings of angels, and that as the wings grew they would bear us up nearer and nearer to God continually. Was not it nice and plain? So nice and odd too, is not it, to think that there may be all that great wonderful good, in just speaking German, for instance, if one does it because one is told and ought. There now I have come to the last button, I must not speak another English word; I must run down and have the piano open, and the music spread out, as he likes to see it, before Mr. Gosse comes, or it will not be a good beginning, and I shall not be doing what I was told to do in the sermon.'

Mrs. Ingram sent for Rose in the course of the afternoon, and they had a long talk about the Marshalls; and when the Professor came into the drawing-room half an hour before dinner-time, he found his wife sitting alone, and gazing into the fire with a very grave, absorbed face. He came behind her and put his hand on her shoulder.

'Well, my love, what is the matter now? What new anxiety are you brooding over? Have Packer and Nurse, one or both, given warning; or have you discovered the cook in fresh nefarious transactions with the rag and bone merchant; or which of the babies is it that has got a cold in its head?'

Mrs. Ingram turned up a face half tearful and half smiling to answer.

‘Yes,’ she said, ‘I was thinking of anxieties, but for once, Alexander, not of my own, which somehow to-night look smaller than I have ever thought them before. I was thinking of that other mother Rose has been telling me about, and realizing what a heavy burden she has to bear, with far worse health than mine, and many delicate children, and a husband who is no support to her. I was pitying her for that. The husband, from what I can gather, appears to be a good-hearted man, fond of his wife and children, and a clever man, too ; he listens to his little daughter reading *Rasselas*, but he is idle and self-indulgent. I was wishing that he could see you, and that you could talk to him a little.’

‘I, my love ; but I should not know what to say to him, I am not used to talking to people of his class. It is not my way nor my business ; I am not a clergyman.’

‘No, but you are a husband and a father, and you have a sickly, nervous wife who throws the chief burden of the family on you, and you take it without complaint. I can’t help thinking that if that other father knew about you—what you do for us, and how little rest or indulgence you ever allow yourself—it would make an impression on him.’

‘He probably would not understand that my sort of work cost any effort ; he would look on me as a bloated aristocrat rolling in luxury.’

‘Not if he saw enough to know how your time is spent. He would see that you give all the comforts and luxuries to us, and keep only the work for yourself. I suppose it’s quite impossible for people in different ranks of life to be really intimate with each other ; but I can’t help thinking it would be a great help to that other father, and make him see his own conduct in a new light, if he could get near enough to you in a natural way to know what you think about your duties, to your wife and children, and how you manage to fulfil them. I know it’s impossible—it was only a wish !’

Professor Ingram stood silent for a minute and stirred the fire thoughtfully.

‘I don’t think, however, that it ought to be impossible,’ he said. ‘I doubt whether it can be a right state of things when the outward circumstances of life make a gulf so wide that community in the grand human relationships cannot bridge it over. Pray what is the name and occupation of this “other father,” about whose conduct you and Rose seem resolved to concern yourselves ? I certainly don’t promise to seek him out, but circumstances might throw us together.’

Mrs. Ingram gave all the information she had gathered from Rose, and the Professor wrote the address clearly in his memorandum book before he went upstairs to dress for dinner. He was just then engaged in delivering a course of lectures on social questions at the Royal Institution, and his dressing-room wall over the washing-stand was ornamented with papers containing memoranda and lists of figures, which he kept thus before his eyes that he might carry on the chain of reasoning he was en-

gaged upon at every spare moment. To-day, though his eyes fell on these papers, his thoughts took another direction. He was not just then in the mood to think of his fellow-creatures in masses represented by figures. The working classes, about whose position and future prospects he had been discoursing that day, had become individualized to him as they had never been before in the person of that 'other father,' with a sickly wife and delicate children, on whose ill-regulated life it might be his duty to seek to exercise a more immediate influence than could be hoped from social changes.

THE CHARLEMAGNE ROMANCES.

BOIARDO.

CHAPTER II.

As he rode in the direction of Dragontina's garden, the Knight of Montalbano came upon a cavalier who lay prostrate on the ground, weeping bitterly. This turned out to be no other than the Iroldo of Fiordiligi's story, who was thus passionately lamenting the fate of his friend Prasildo. That too faithful friend had delivered him from imprisonment by the substitution of himself, and this was the day on which the generous Prasildo was to be brought out to feed the evil fairy Fallerina's serpent—the monstrous guardian of her gates.

Though Iroldo bade him depart, 'since no one but Orlando or Rinaldo could help in such a case,' yet Rinaldo modestly replied, that he 'knew a little of war,' and seeing so beautiful a friendship as that of Iroldo and Prasildo, would fain become a third in it. As they were speaking, Fallerina's servants arrived, bringing two prisoners to the serpent; one was a lady, and to his horror Rinaldo recognised her as his guide, Fiordiligi. It was little for him to disperse or slay this troop of common soldiers and their leader, but his bravery appeared to the friends absolutely superhuman, and they would fain have worshipped him as 'Macometto,' or 'Trivigante.*' Half amused and half shocked, Rinaldo took advantage of this opening, to spread the faith of which he was a servitor, by explaining to them humbly, that it was not he who was brave of himself, but that it was his faith which gave him strength and courage. So well did he preach, that he converted not only Iroldo and Prasildo, but Fiordiligi, and baptised them all at a fountain which flowed near by. They now all four set off towards the garden of Dragontina, notwithstanding the vehement desire felt by Rinaldo to explore the demesne of Fallerina, of which Fiordiligi had given him a description. But on arriving at the spot they found neither bridge and damsel, nor Orlando and Brandimart; all signs of the garden having vanished.

The only light cast upon the subject of these several disappearances

* Foscolo supposes this doubtful word Trivigante to be derived from Diana Trivia, the sister of Apollo, it being always associated with 'Apollino' by the poets.

was afforded by a fugitive flying in wild disorder, who told them he had seen Angelica in the midst of nine knights, one of whom was Brandimart; but that another, whom he did not know, had performed such monstrous feats that he, their informant, had fled 'two hundred miles' in terror of him, 'and still fled, and always should flee, till he found himself in some good fortress with the drawbridge up.' Concluding from this that Orlando and Brandimart and their companions must have found some means of escape, Rinaldo and Fiordiligi resolved to go to Albracca and ascertain these points.

As they journeyed, they observed a knight lying, fast asleep, beside the river Drada,* with a damsel holding his horse. This knight was recognised by Fiordiligi as the terrible Marfisa, who having made a vow (and already kept it for five years) never to take off her armour till she had overthrown the three kings, Agrican, Gradasso, and Charlemagne himself, had now lain down to take a nap, armed *cap à pied*, having first given directions to her waiting-maid not to wake her unless tidings should arrive that Galafron was killed and his army routed, when she would rise and destroy Agrican and all his army at once!

Fiordiligi, who was greatly terrified at Marfisa, in vain endeavoured to persuade Rinaldo to leave this 'cat' asleep, and not tempt her 'too sharp claws:' he only laughed, and for all other answer struck the amazon's shield a ringing blow. As she started fiercely up, a messenger arrived with an entreaty for help from Galafron. 'Wait but the eighth of an hour till I have taken these three,' cried she, 'and then neither heaven nor hell, nor the universe, shall defend Agrican from my sword!' She now scornfully called to the three knights whom she 'regarded no more than three geese,' 'Come on quickly, so that I may not keep those who require me waiting!' Iroldo and Prasildo accordingly were unhorsed in a twinkling, but with Rinaldo she had 'more to do, for he had a harder skin,' and 'very strange wool to comb!'

In the course of their battle, enraged at seeing her long-tried sword first lose its point and then fly from her grasp, she dealt Rinaldo such a buffet with her fist that the blood flew from both his ears 'says Turpin,' and he was so stunned, that he was saved by the fleetness of Rabican alone. During this affray the fortune of the day before Albracca had once more changed in the absence of Agrican; Galafron and his Christian allies had routed the enemy and taken their camp, setting free Astolfo, and pursuing the fugitives even up to the spot where Marfisa and Rinaldo were engaged. Galafron, seeing Rabican, took for granted that Rinaldo was the murderer of his son Argalià, set upon him, and stunned him with a blow from behind; on this, Marfisa, who had learned to respect Rinaldo, enraged at the foul play, attacked the old king, pulled him off his horse and would have killed him, but that the Christian knights, who had not recognised Rinaldo, and did not know Marfisa to be a woman, defended Galafron, and provoked Marfisa to exercise her 'claws' upon

* The 'Drada' flowed past Albracca.

them. Rinaldo now watched the conflict in which, though set upon by numbers, the amazon gallantly held her own.

At last, thinking shame to see one, and that one a woman, ungenerously attacked by so many powerful knights, he sided with Marfisa. 'Now,' cries she, with her accustomed strong language, 'though the earth and the sky be against me, I care not, you being with me !' Thereupon she first unhorsed Uberto, and then, seizing Sir Balan by the helm with both hands, she pulled him off his horse !

Brandimart, who had proved pretty nearly a match for her, now also stood aside to give her fair play ; and at this moment Fiordiligi, who had, as we have seen, a great dread of Marfisa, and had not been able to control her fears, lest Brandimart should be tempted to fight with her, left the sheltered spot where she had waited the issue of the combat, and came to seek him in the field. When her husband perceived her he was struck with such great and sudden gladness that he forgot all the world besides, and tearing off helmet and shield, rushed to hold his recovered treasure in his arms once more, without a thought of all the wondering eyes around them. But this rapturous re-union did not last long, for Fiordiligi was carried off from his side whilst they slept by a wicked hermit.*

The recluse was, luckily for Fiordiligi, terrified by a lion, and she escaped ; but as she fled she was seized by a 'savage man,' who tied her to a tree, and then lay down at a little distance to watch her. Brandimart, waking up and not finding his beloved, was in great affliction, and roamed about seeking her ; whilst thus engaged he saw three ill-favoured giants with some camels, and on one of them a beautiful damsel, (whom at first he took for his own,) and who seemed to be carried away against her will. Of course Brandimart attacked the giants in order to deliver their captive ; but the issue would have been little doubtful had not Orlando, on his return from his combat with Agrican, come, drawn by the sounds of strife, to his assistance. As it was, Brandimart was wounded almost to

* Friars, hermits, and priests in general for the most part play either a deceitful or a ridiculous part in the pages of both Boiardo and Ariosto ; the poets can seldom refrain from a joke at their expense, or a thrust at the seeming sanctity which forms a cloak only for their vices. Even Turpin does not escape ; not only does he bear the *onus* of all the most monstrous statements of the poems, which are to be believed, because Turpin was an Archbishop, 'and a priest—much more an Archbishop—cannot lie,' but a few grotesque touches make him ridiculous whenever he appears : thus 'Turpin of Rana' (Rheims) sprawls like a 'ranocchio' (frog) at the tournament ; is tied 'like an inkstand' to the girdle of the gigantic Alfrera on his giraffe ; and when he finds and mounts Frontino, Ruggiero's horse, in the general flight of the Christian army, falls from his back into a bog, whence he has to be drawn by the laughing Ruggiero. In the same battle, Charlemagne's fat almoner, Biagio, so terrified that he can only remain stationary on his equally fat mule, is knocked down and jumped over by Rinaldo as he rushes to the rescue of Charlemagne. In Ariosto, however, may be found several honourable exceptions to the hypocrisy of priests and hermits—as, for instance, the hermit who assists Isabella, and the recluse who instructs Ruggiero.

death, and was only recovered by the herbal knowledge of the lady-captive, who had observed a plant of sovereign virtue growing near; and who applied it, closing the wound with her finger, on which Brandimart was instantly healed, and started up, demanding Fiordiligi. 'Behold her! she has even now made you a present of your life!' cries Orlando, pointing to the lady; but, alas! It is a stranger whom Brandimart beholds. This lady announces herself to be Leodilla, daughter of the King of the Distant Isles. Her history is not a pleasing one; but she is interrupted in the narration of it by the appearance of a beautiful snow-white stag with golden horns. It is the stag of Morgana, the Fairy of Treasure, which 'changes its horns six times a day, and can never be taken without the fairy's aid: and she loves none, but hates everyone; for riches and beauty often make their possessor haughty.'

Brandimart felt a dormant touch of avarice quicken in his nature at the sight of these golden horns, and started off, mounted as he was on Brigliadoro, in pursuit. He followed the quarry all day, but in vain, for he at least was no favourite of Fortune. At nightfall he relinquished the fruitless chase, and lay down to sleep in a wood; but his slumbers were disturbed by the mournful sound of a woman's lamentations. He rose hastily to ascertain the source whence they proceeded, and ere long discovered his lost Fiordiligi, pale and exhausted, still bound to the tree, whilst her savage captor amused himself with watching her unavailing struggles and tears. It is needless to say that she was speedily rescued from her terrible position and clasped in her husband's arms.

The Count meanwhile, for whom wealth had no temptation, quietly pursued his way, regardless of the fairy's stag, with Leodilla behind him on the crupper.

When night came on they lay down to sleep; but Orlando's vigorous snoring so disturbed the lady that she was kept awake all night; and as she thought he might have amused her by conversation if he must keep her awake, she considered his behaviour exceedingly unmannerly, and felt herself much injured. The next morning, as the lusty knight, all unconscious of offence, mounted her behind him, he found her surprisingly sullen and silent. But he soon forgot her taciturnity in a new adventure offered him by Morgana, the Treasure-Fairy, herself. As he rode onward a damsel, mounted on a palfrey, with a book in her hand, and a beautiful horn slung round her neck, approached, and courteously accosted him, offering him the 'greatest adventure' ever undertaken by knight; but, to accomplish it, she told him, he must be of 'fearless heart as a perfect knight should be.' She then informed him he must blow the horn three times, and at every blast some fearful thing would come forth, when he must consult the book to know how to deal with it. But should he feel the slightest sensation of fear at the results of the horn-blast he would remain a prisoner for life.

Orlando, always ready for adventure, and curious to see the issue of the blast, seizes and blows the horn without more ado; on which two bulls,

'each more fierce than the other,' rush forth. He reads in the book that he must bind these brutes and plough the ground with them. But when he approaches them, first one, then the other, flings him up in the air, with its iron horns. Nothing daunted, however, he finally seizes them by the horns, binds them, makes a ploughshare of Durlindana, and turns up the ground; after which he looses the daunted bulls, which go lowing off into the forest. At the next blast a dragon, breathing flame, comes forth. The book directs that this monster's head be cut off quickly, lest it stifle its assailant with its poison and fire. Afterwards all its teeth are to be drawn and sowed in the newly-ploughed ground, and the crop is to be reaped. Half suffocated with the monster's poisonous breath, and burnt in clothes and armour, the hardy knight nevertheless fulfils the conditions, cuts off the dragon's head, draws its teeth, and sows them, when up spring plumes, helms, and whole persons of a crowd of armed men crying 'War! war!' and making at the Count. Says he, 'If I take harm here the fault will be my own, for "who sows bad seed reaps worse fruit."' But Durlindana reaps the harvest as effectually as it ploughed the ground. And Orlando, though very weary, bruised, battered, and burnt, yet strong and patient as ever at heart, blows the third blast, and stands expectant of some great issue, and, lo, there comes forth only a little white hound! 'What meagre adventure is this?' cries the knight, and furious at being mocked, as he considers, he flings down book and horn, and turns wrathfully away. But the damsel of the horn, who has been 'weaving garlands in the meadow,'—for what matters it to Fortune who succeeds and who fails?—cries to him to stay, 'For in the world there is neither king nor mighty lord who ever had so great adventure;' for the Fata Morgana, the dispenser of riches, has sent this hound to make him rich and happy for life, and by it he may take the stag with the golden horns, which can be taken in no other way, and each of whose antlers weighs a hundred pounds.

Orlando listens with a scornful smile. 'Lady,' says he, "it does not grieve me that I have imperilled my life, for a knight lives on peril and fatigue; but hope of acquiring gold and silver would never have drawn my sword from its scabbard. Take back, then, thy book and horn, and let another undertake this adventure. I thank thee for thy counsels, but I follow a higher object.' Then, upbraiding himself for so long neglecting the service of Angelica, he called on the sullen Leodilla, whom he had meanwhile heard reviling him, to mount, and once more departed on his journey.

Before long they met a knight, who was no other than Ordauro, Leodilla's lover, and who called on Orlando to fight, or give her up.

'If she be thine,' rejoined Orlando, 'take her by all means, and I thank thee for the courtesy; for it seems to me I have a nettle at my back!' Ordauro, though much astonished at Orlando's want of taste, and half suspecting him of cowardice, nevertheless takes Leodilla behind

him, and rides away.* Orlando now returns direct to Albracca. He is received by Angelica with every token of affection, and she ministers, with her own hands, to the refreshment of his person; so that, for the moment, he feels himself 'in Paradise.' Whilst at supper, however, he learns that Rinaldo and Marfisa are now Angelica's besiegers. This news hurls him at once from the pinnacle of happiness he believed himself to have attained, and a mad jealousy of Rinaldo takes possession of his mind. He becomes violently unjust to his cousin, whom he accuses of being ungrateful, treacherous, malicious; in short, 'more evil than Lucifer.' Chafing and tossing he cannot wait for dawn, but rises, and arms so hurriedly that he fastens on his helmet and arms with the buckles awry, and would have gone forth thus, in fact, defenceless, had not Angelica, who is not aware of Rinaldo's presence in the enemy's camp, perceived it, and come forth herself to be 'Castellan.' At the sight of that angelic face, his sword almost falls from his hand, and he leaps down, and humbly kneels before her, whilst with her own hand she renews his burnt crest and broken shield, and soothes his troubled heart with many sweet, though flattering words.

Rinaldo, in the meantime, though he hates Angelica, yet has no special quarrel with her; but he has sworn to destroy Truffaldino, king of Baldacco, and Angelica's defenders have sworn, as we have seen, to protect him. They consider their honour involved; but Rinaldo maintains that it is a false point of honour to defend a villain and a murderer, and that they are no true knights who do so; and on this question he has fought a whole day with Aquilant, Grifone, and the other knights. Marfisa has changed her side from caprice only: she hates Angelica, and has a contemptible opinion of her; and with her usual violent, though feminine, determination to 'have her own way,' she is fiercely desirous of her destruction. But Rinaldo had recognized the fact of Orlando's presence amongst the defenders by his blast of defiance (for Orlando was much skilled in the winding of a horn); and as he loved his cousin with 'a perfect love, like an elder brother,' he did not wish to fight with him, especially on this false cause of quarrel. Nevertheless Orlando's unreasoning fury forced him into a combat; and, the two great champions of Christendom being thus engaged, it must needs be the *ne plus ultra* of chivalric prowess which is described. Yet the author so constantly endeavours to outdo his former descriptions, that the result is a kind of monotony of monstrous feats of arms; so that, as Berni remarks, he 'seems to use one stamp' in describing all these conflicts.

When Orlando rides forth heading the other knights, Astolfo, who has remained with his cousin Rinaldo, cries 'What is to be done now? Shall we strike while the iron is hot?'

'Fair and softly, good cousin, for hither comes our Count of Anglante, and we are not where we were!' replies Rinaldo.

* This Leodilla at last turns out to be Brandimart's sister. He has been stolen in his infancy from his father, Monodant, king of the Distant Isles.

'And who may be this Anglante?' cries scornful Marfisa, laughing.
'Were it even he who killed Almanto I care not!'

But presently, as she marks Orlando's stately figure, she remarks,

'That first knight looks like a gallant fellow!'

'Aye,' cries Rinaldo, 'esteem all you have done hitherto a jest, for he is the flower of valour, and thou its climax! Do thou first meet him, and then my cousin Astolfo; I know you will both go to the ground, but I will come to the rescue.'

But Marfisa is engaged to finish 'a conflict begun with Aquilant and Grifone; and the treacherous Truffaldino unhorses Astolfo by swerving from the encounter, and striking him after he has passed; so that Rinaldo himself meets Orlando. But each time that Orlando would urge Boiardo to the shock the intelligent creature stands stockstill, for he knows his master, and will not go against him. Orlando is 'out of his intellect and his mind' at being thus foiled. His eyes 'appear flashes and flames of fire, and he gnashes his teeth so that the sound can be heard afar.' Meanwhile, Rinaldo expostulates with him. 'Thou knowest, my cousin, that injustice is hateful to God. By what misfortune hast thou lost that gentle mind which was once thine, so that both by choice and nature thou didst ever defend the right? Dear cousin, much I fear that familiarity with evil has led thee astray, and that this accursed woman has destroyed thy noble heart at the roots. Wouldst thou have it known at court that thou hast undertaken the defence of a traitor? Wouldst thou not rather choose death than to be spotted with dishonour?'

'Behold the thief turned preacher!' cries Orlando, who, as he cannot move Boiardo against his cousin, overwhelms him with abuse. But Rinaldo seeing Truffaldino, willingly turns aside towards him. Truffaldino flies; but Rabican is fleetier even than fear.

One knight after another is struck down by the fierce avenger in their attempt to rescue the fugitive, and, at last Rinaldo, who can be relentless and stern as fate, seizes the unhappy wretch and ties him, head downwards, to the tail of his horse, and thus drags him round the field, casting scornful taunts the while at his powerless defenders.

Orlando had, by the timely arrival of Brandimart, recovered Brigliadoro, and, gladly mounting, had sent the refractory Boiardo back to the castle. He was now at blows with Marfisa, but seeing the fate of his *protégé*, Truffaldino, and more irritated than ever by the contumely heaped by Rinaldo upon his cause, he begged time that he might finish his engagement with his cousin. 'After he had killed him' he promised to return to Marfisa.

'You are very much mistaken if you think to kill him,' says Marfisa; 'I have tried you both and know your conditions, and you are "reckoning without your host." You will have "spent your money well" if you can cry "quits" this evening. But, go! I am content to watch which of you really is the stronger.'

Thus released, and no longer impeded by any obstacle, Orlando furiously

urged Briadoro in pursuit of Rinaldo. The latter turned at his cousin's threatening voice. 'I desire no question with thee,' cried he; 'yet dost thou force it upon me. God is my witness, that what I do I do against my will!'

'I am certain of that,' cried Orlando tauntingly; 'for now hast thou neither merchant nor traveller to deal with!'

Says Rinaldo once more, 'I have no quarrel with thee. I love thee, not as a cousin, but as a brother. If I have offended thee I have done it blindly, and I humbly ask pardon.'

To this affectionate appeal Orlando replies, 'Vile coward! Thou art no son of Alymon, but of the false Ginamo of Mayence!'

This last insult exhausts Rinaldo's patience.

'Squinter! obstinate mule!' he cries; 'give me back my Boiardo which thou hast stolen! I prize neither thee nor thy black enchantment one snap of the fingers!' And now the battle begins in earnest. 'Fire, not breath, issued from their helmets. At their words the air trembled; they appeared two bears, yea, two dragons in their heat. But what? It suffices to say Orlando and Rinaldo!' At the first interchange of blows Angelica's crest flies from the helmet of Almonte, whilst that of Mambrino* alone saves its wearer's head. At the next, shield and armour and doublet are shorn away, and leave bare the flesh; at the third, Fusberta 'anooints Orlando with other than lard' so that he is stunned, and Briadoro gallops off with him fainting in the saddle. Says Rinaldo, 'I know that this little novel of ours cannot last three days, so I had better "put the bread in the oven quickly!"' Whereupon he follows, and so 'hammers' at Orlando that he brings him to himself. The latter in his turn strikes Rinaldo on the head with such goodwill that not only does his casque send forth flashes, but the knight falls back senseless on the crupper, and the swift Rabican dashes away with him till he recovers.† Then the cousins' fight till the ground is strewn with broken armour, and they pause to breathe, and shower on each other a storm of mutual abuse, in which all their respective famous deeds are travestied, and made matter of reproach. The combat lasts till night, with no advantage on either side, save that Rinaldo

* The helmets of Almonte and Mambrino. The famous 'helmet of Mambrino,' with which we are so familiar in *Don Quixote*, did not originate either with Boiardo or Turpin. In 'The Innamoramento di Rinaldo,' there is an account of Mambrino, a Pagan king, who makes war on Charlemagne. He is killed by Rinaldo, but no particular mention is made of his helmet. An especial romance, called 'Aspramonte,' from the name of the place of combat, was written upon the great battle of Orlando with Almonte. This book relates how in this battle the Paladin acquired his armour, his horse Briadoro, his sword Durlindana, and his famous ivory horn. Boiardo tells us further that this helmet was made by a necromancer, named Abrizac, who gave it to Almonte.

† It is in this peculiar tenacity of seat that the superiority of both Orlando and Rinaldo seems chiefly to consist, for though they are quite unconscious, though their arms hang loose, and their swords are only retained by being chained to the wrist, though they sway from side to side helplessly with the motion of their steeds, yet they never lose their seats!

is wounded, whereas, being enchanted, Orlando can only be bruised. They separate at last with many hard words.

Orlando is terribly ashamed to present himself to Angelica, having lost both her morning gifts ; but she is too false to show any signs of what may be passing in her mind, and she only says such sweet words as she knows will please the Count. But hitherto she has supposed his combat to be with Marfisa ; when, on the contrary, she finds not only that Rinaldo is there, but that it is with him that Orlando has fought all day, the whole current of her thoughts changes. She feels she must see Rinaldo or die : and how to do it ? She cannot help a strange change of countenance, but, 'like one who is wise and wicked,' she covers her thought. 'I am sad,' says she, 'for though I have been on the wall all day, yet could I not see thee as I desired. I wish that Marfisa, hard as she is, would grant me safe conduct for one day, that I might go on to the field and behold thy mighty deeds near.'

This safe conduct is procured by the devoted Sacripant, and Angelica, sleepless, and rising long before dawn, rouses Orlando and hurries him to the field.

WOMANKIND.

CHAPTER XVIII.

PARENTS AND CHILDREN.

It seems a truism to say that the first duty is to parents, but in these days the fifth commandment is so much disused that we have need to remember the awful words with which Malachi ended, and St. John the Baptist took up, 'To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and of the children to the parents, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.'

How many homes do we know where the young people rule, and the old people submit ; or if the parents chance to have strong wills, the next thing we hear is that the girl wants to go into a sisterhood 'because she can't get on with her mother.' Or the daughters are to be met with at every relation's or friend's house for long visits, while the mother is left alone at home. And it is well if the young ladies are not openly taking up causes of which their parents are known to disapprove.

There is no doubt that much of this is the outcome of the parents' disinclination to make themselves respected in early childhood. Liberties have been allowed and laughed at, indulgence has been supposed to secure affection, authority has been laid aside, and there has been no habit of submission. The children have learnt to consider themselves the important creatures in the house, and being entirely educated by strangers, have their minds and opinions cast in different moulds from those of their parents, and when their wills and tastes clash, the young ones see no reason for giving way.

This is often the fault of the original mismanagement, but it is also the temptation of the age. Other young people are seen disregarding their parents, making light of their opinions, and holding home duties cheap; and while the parents fear to be disadvantageously compared with others, the children grow ashamed of their restraints, and make excuses to their companions for submitting. It is to the children that I would now speak, especially the growing-up girls, and to beg them most earnestly to let filial duty have the foremost place with them. Only the highest duty of all should ever come before it, and that duty should never be treated as an excuse for disobedience in non-essentials. For instance, an absolutely sinful action must not be done even at a parent's bidding, and on the other hand Sacraments and prayers are not to be given up for any mortal's command, but the times and place of these are to be decided by the parents.—Yes, even though they seem to be holding their children back from the higher and better part, obedience is still the duty and the rule, and there will be nothing really lost by obedient waiting.

While writing this, I seem to be committing high treason to parents to assume that they are even foes to the higher course, instead of placing foremost those blessed homes where the father and mother are the guides and leaders, and every nobler and better thought of their children's is lovingly traced back to them; where they hold by the hand as long as the paths lie close together, and give their aid, their blessing, and their sympathy when the children leave the nest. Oh! glad homes, happy lives, where such is the case; where the father's loving, yet sometimes grave and stern authority, can really form the child's thought of his heavenly Father; where the mother watches, loves, and sympathises so as to be the likeness to her children of the Church; where obedience is willing, honour comes of itself, and discipline is accepted as from indisputable authority, where concealment is unknown, and confidence is free, with the sense that no friend no adviser is equal to the parents, and where errors are confessed not from the mere sense of duty, but because the grieved conscience can here only find rest in earthly forgiveness. Here the children are the glad helpers, and as they grow older, the first councillors, making a little house of peers in the family plans. Here 'Papa' is not only the supreme authority, but the model of all that is good, wise, or noble, the prime hero of his daughters' imagination; and often loved by them (especially) with a deep and passionate enthusiasm; while 'Mamma' is the unquestioned judge and arbitress in all questions of home, the comforter in all griefs or pains, the intercessor in all troubles; one in heart with the girls, and the first of women with her young sons,—whose whole notions of woman-kind are formed on their mothers and sisters.

Such homes as these do not need what I am saying, for they have their guides. Only I would beg and pray all parents whose children are young, not for present ease or indulgence sake, to waste the mutual blessing of such a home, or to get their children estranged by neglect, or spoilt by indulgence in their early days; and above all to keep themselves loved and respected.

But there are too many who do not come up—not to this ideal—but to this reality—which, thank heaven, I have seen, and intimately known, again and again. Weakness, neglect, ill judgment, and ill temper, have loosed these bands of love, and the young people feel the disadvantage, and are in difficulties. Sometimes the mother's religious standard is stricter than her daughter's, and yet narrower. This is most apt to be the case when the girl has had little of her mother's influence during her education; but it is inevitable that each generation should have somewhat different views of life from the last; and where there is much difference of age between mother and child, and both are persons with much spirit of their time, the discordance is often strong.

The mother crystallised her opinions when she became a busy housewife, the daughter's are those of her time. She despises her mother's quiet meditations and homely charities, as something to which the present world is quite superior. She believes the one to be mere dreaming, the other to be against all rules of political economy; and if Mamma holds by the parish Church, whatever it be, and loves her Prayer-book, and the writers that touched her inmost soul, the daughter seeks the most exciting functions, talks of Catholicity and primitive usage, and has scornful words for simple piety. If the mother is strong and resolute, the girl is a murmuring victim in her own eyes; if Mamma is weak and gentle, the girl takes her own way, and makes her wretched, unless sometimes the father's authority comes in. And thus it is that the daughters of widows are apt to be the most undutiful, reckless, and extreme in their ways, of all young ladies. Sons of widows, and especially eldest sons, have a sense of protection, which makes them put on manhood early, and become noble and gentle characters in their very boyhood, and the same is often the case with the eldest daughters of widowers, who often take the matron's duties on them with all their might; but widows' daughters are far too apt to show too slight a regard for their mother, and treat her almost as an equal or inferior, while for want of attention to her hints, they become the laughing stock and the sorrow of their friends.

There is nothing for it but that the young people should make it their strongest and most decided duty to bow to their parents' will. Long ago St. Paul wrote, 'Let them learn first to show piety at home.' If the parents will not or cannot enforce it, still the children must pay it of their own accord. The old question is still true 'What is your religion worth, if it do not teach you to honour your parents?'

So far as sons are concerned, after they have taken their place in the world, and founded fresh families, they must often use their own judgment, and when they take Holy Orders they come under our Lord's special call to His ministers to be ready to forsake father or mother for His sake, and the Gospel's; but there is no excuse for an unmarried daughter's neglecting her parents' commands—and she must especially beware of fancying that direct call to the ministry a call to herself to run into a self-chosen way of life.

When the parents, going on the principles held in their youth, shrink from dissipation for their children, and think certain amusements wrong, the daughter's duty is plain, whatever her convictions may be. What is not wrong in itself, becomes wrong *for her*, the instant it becomes a matter of wilfulness or disobedience. If she disobeys, or extorts permission, she can hardly honestly pray, 'Lead us not into temptation.'

So again with the intellectual training now offered. It may be a prejudice on the parents' part that objects to it, and the girl may feel the deprivation unreasonable and hard; but no examination, no lectures are worth that extorted consent which is tantamount to a prohibition; and quiet steady home perseverance will be blessed in its stead.

And when neither intellectual training, love of variety, nor even the calls of schools and poor can be attended to without neglecting the comforts and pleasure of elderly parents, the home duty is the prime one. Visiting of rich and poor alike must be given up to this. Girls should not be continually staying with friends, if their family is so small that their absence leaves their mother's day lonesome, their father's evening uncheered.

Respectfulness in word is another great point. Children who have been allowed to call their parents by ridiculous names find it hard to leave off, but it should be made a principle of honour to use the parental name with truly courteous respect, when speaking to or of parents. These tokens form the mind more than we think, and as to wranglings, contradictions, or disputings, such as to an equal would be discourteous, what are they to a parent? Alas! that it should be needful to go over such ground.

Young people may laugh, and ask if we wish to return to the days when the Duke of Somerset said his daughter's undutifulness had broken his heart, because she sat down while he was asleep, or even to the 'sir and ma'am' of our grandfathers. No; but what is the only way to make households happy, or to bring God's blessing on high or low, is that the father and mother should be 'loved, honoured, and succoured.' It is true that there are bounds to obedience—no child is justified in doing what he knows to be morally wrong at a parent's command, nor in neglecting a direct religious obligation. A daughter's obedience does not compel her to marry where she does not love, but it does require her not to marry without her parent's consent, even when she has the legal power to do so. Extraordinary tyranny overthrows general rules, and here and there temperaments may be incapable of being at peace together; but in all ordinary cases, though there may be difficulties in implicit obedience, yet it is the certain way of obeying God; and opposition or undutifulness are fatal blots in a Christian character.

They are the peculiar temptation of any age of rapid progress, and in religious matters the difficulty is often increased by the requirements of devotional books, and rules that startle the minds of the elder generation; and it is not quite certain that the reviewers and promoters of these

rules always do attend duly to the rights of parents, or think of the burthens laid on the conscience of children. Conscientious, pious parents should not be spoken of as being in outer darkness, because, though themselves reverent and devout at the Holy Communion, they never heard of early or fasting Communion, and dread them for their child's health.

And in our poor judgment the case seems to be that "obedience is better than sacrifice," and that no Eucharists, no confessions, no prayers can do much for those who are undutiful in their way of seeking them. Non-essentials must give way to obedience, and the difficulty is, where lies the essential.

Patient waiting, and meek obedience, whenever the conscience is not at stake, win the way at last, and bring a blessing, where a struggle would have driven it away. But for most, it is merely a little fret and annoyance, when temper, courtesy, and submission are all that is wanting. And happy is the daughter who thus wins full confidence, who sometimes gains over the parents' hearts from this world, and brings her religious training to help them. Happy is she—even if, while her brothers and sisters have bright homes, she remains the stay and support of her parents' old age, giving to them the best years of her life ungrudgingly. She may be less cared for by the world, but God's love is for the dutiful child; and oh! above all beware of setting light by father and mother, however superior you may think yourself. To judge by all God's word, nothing is more hateful in His sight; and the beginnings of the sin come in idle words, following the fashion of the day in pretending to despise authority, and in selfish neglect of parents' pleasure, and impatience of restraint.

The previous papers have urged to devotion, to charity, to employment; but none of these things, save the actual service to God, are to be weighed in the scale with 'piety at home.' The girl who will not sacrifice her own pursuits to help or amuse her mother, and who refuses to play, sing, or read the paper to her father because 'she is so busy,' is beginning a wrong course, however plausible her excuse.

I do not mean that all occupations on which parents do not look with a favourable eye should be given up, unless there is an absolute prohibition.

If there be, obedience is the only course; but if it be a matter of distaste, or want of comprehension, or distrust of novelty, and if the daughter be thoroughly dutiful, acquiescence will generally be granted, if she is perfectly truthful, and yet not obtrusive.

Even when a life seems to be spoilt and made joyless by such obedience, still it is truly earning the blessing beyond this world; but the real truth is that the parents are much oftener the victims than the children. It is they who sacrifice their comfort and happiness, they who submit to neglect, they who are dragged into expense, and endure fatigue, and who, too often, are rewarded with murmurs and disregard.

Girls, ought this to be? Ought 'O never mind Mamma, she will not care' to be heard? Or, 'Papa is cross, but I'll have my pleasure;' or

mayhap some equivalent in ruder slang to be heard from the lips of a Christian maiden?

The poet Gray wrote sadly that he had made the discovery that we can have but one mother. We all make it sooner or later, if our lives are of the ordinary length. Oh! do not let the discovery be made among pangs of shame and misery.

Reverence your parents. Do not let your father be looked on merely as purse-bearer, from whom money and consent are to be forced, or your mother as the slave of all your whims, the household drudge, who bears all the cares, makes the contrivances, does what no one else likes, and endures to be domineered over; while you fancy yourself devout, intellectual, or charitable, or gay. Unless you bear your part with them, and make their happiness and good pleasure your prime earthly object so long as you are a daughter at home, all the rest is utter hollowness. Where there are many in family, one may be more needful to her parents than the others, but that place *must* be filled by someone, or the daughters are not guiltless.

PAPERS ON SISTERHOODS.

XIII.—MENTAL TRAINING.

THE purely intellectual and scientific training in religious and Biblical knowledge which has been indicated as the best possible instrument for quickening the perceptions and strengthening the faculties of women intending themselves for the Common Life, is not by any means the only literary study which it is desirable for them to pursue. The affective and emotional side of their natures needs culture also, and this is most readily applied by the means of healthy religious biographies, and books of a robust devotional character. The words 'healthy' and 'robust' are emphatic, and are meant to exclude a very large part of the current literature on these subjects, such as the late Dr. Faber's works, of which only one, *Growth in Holiness*, and that with many deductions, can be recommended at all; such manuals of devotion as are modelled on the Prayers of St. Gertrude; and the large majority of recent Lives of Roman Catholic authorship, as, for instance, that of Marie Eustelle Harpain. Books couched in a sentimental, and, still more, in an erotic strain; books which make mere feelings all in all; books which attribute unfailing efficacy to the use of certain forms of devotion; all such writings as these ought to be most carefully excluded at all times from the course of spiritual reading. Nor is there any loss of fervour involved in the strict observance of such a rule; for it does not operate against books like the *Imitation*, St. Francis de Sales' *Devout Life*, Bellarmine's *Seven Words from the Cross*, Guevara's *Mysteries of Mount Calvary*, Scupoli's *Spiritual Combat*, and many similar

writings. But the works censured are to these in style, tone, and execution, just what sugary, coloured, gilt, and lace-bordered French religious prints are when compared with the master-pieces of Raffaele, Fra Angelico, and Domenichino, in their power of elevating the mind by their representations of sacred subjects.

The same rule holds good of religious biography. By far the greater part of the popular lives of saints are written with singular lack of judgment and spiritual insight, and with an even graver disregard of plain truth, when it is thought that more honour would accrue to the subject of the memoir, or more edification to readers, by embroidering the facts. A palmary example of this is the ascription of the gift of tongues to St. Francis Xavier; whereas his own letters tell us clearly of the very great obstacles which linguistic difficulties put in his way as a missionary. The biographers, entirely failing to see that it was a much greater thing for him to have achieved the success he did without miraculous powers than with them, reasoned first, that such powers would have been extremely useful to him; secondly, that they would be a very great argument for the Faith to all readers of his life; thirdly, that he certainly must have had them: This kind of fault runs through a great many Lives; while others are almost equally marred by their exaltation of an unwholesome and morbid condition of mind and body (as in the case of Margaret Mary Alacoque) into the rank of distinguished graces and proofs of holiness. Much judgment in selection is therefore necessary; and it will be advisable to choose biographies of persons who did some solid work, and whose memoirs are based on ascertainable facts. St. Vincent de Paul, St. Francis Xavier, Sainte-Beuve's account of Port Royal, Madame de Miramon, St. Jane Frances de Chantal, St. Francis de Sales, are subjects of the kind indicated.

This question of spiritual reading is one of those which mark a necessary point of departure from the mediæval theory, but which is in fact a recurrence to an earlier system. In the Middle Ages, the comparative rarity and cost of books, and, what was a more serious thing still, the very few works written in vernacular tongues, added to the low standard of information current, made it needful to say very little about private reading on the part of religious of either sex, but to lay very great stress instead on meditation. In the more ancient convents of the early Church, notably in that founded by St. Jerome at Bethlehem, under St. Eustachium, literary study formed a large part of the daily routine; but the Egyptian monks, through reverence for the famous St. Antony, who was entirely unacquainted with letters, encouraged imitation of his example, and exalted meditation, not merely above, but almost to the exclusion of reading. Nevertheless, they were not so much in error as might at first be thought; for meditation has the one immeasurable advantage over reading that it must, when properly conducted, be active, and bring several faculties of the mind into exercise, whereas mere reading may be altogether passive, and do almost nothing for the under-

standing. Therefore, the rule to follow is to select such books for spiritual reading as contain a large amount of really solid matter, and as small an amount of mere fancy and ornament as may be; such, in fact, as are but slenderly stored with adjectives, and would be practically unaffected by the excision of all the fine phrases. Then, these books are not to be barely read, but studied; and the students must have the idea brought clearly before them that thinking steadily over what has been perused is much more useful than the perusal itself. The foundation of the art of meditation is the faculty of seeing at a glance what is the really salient point in a passage—where the grain of wheat lies. It is this faculty which enables some men to do like Dr. Johnson, ‘tear the heart out of a book’ in one rapid perusal; while others, labouring patiently from title to *finis*, rise from their task without any clear impressions. A good way to acquire this art, which is very rarely innate, is to read with a pencil in hand, and to put a small mark in the margin at each strong point made by the writer; and then to go over the chapter, section, or volume, somewhat later, reading *only* the marked passages. This, done with ten or a dozen books, especially if the marks be submitted to some competent critic, who can judge whether important points have been passed over, or insignificant ones singled out, will train the reader gradually to distinguish between solid matter and mere decoration or verbiage, the latter of which almost entirely predominates in most recent French books of devotion. And, where time is not lacking, the process may be profitably carried out further by making a brief digest in writing of the book so studied. But when all this has been done, the student has achieved no more than to collect materials suitable for meditation, which process is subsequent to these preliminaries.

Meditation consists in reasoning out conclusions from the points laid before the mind, and should end in some resolve of practical action. It is thus primarily an *intellectual* process, and has only secondarily to do with the emotions and affections. No doubt, thoroughly good meditations will quicken the emotions, because they will act like vivid paintings in bringing certain ideas forcibly in sight; and when these ideas, such as that of the Passion, are in themselves suggestive of emotional feeling, this result may fairly be looked for. Nevertheless, such quickening of the emotions must needs depend on the vividness of the picture in the mind, and the effort necessary to call up this picture is almost exclusively intellectual. So then, a good meditation will consist of three distinct stages of thought: I. Calling up the idea clearly before the mind, so as to be able to fix the thoughts steadily upon it. II. Asking the question, ‘What then?’ *i.e.*, What must needs be true, since this is true? III. ‘What am I bound to do in consequence?’ Now there are two popular kinds of meditation which do not answer to this description; one of which is useless, and the other hurtful. The useless kind is that of sugared-water books of pietistic reverie, chiefly Protes-

tant Evangelical in origin, such as Bogatzsky's *Golden Treasury*, Bishop Oxenden's *Pathway of Safety*, Grant's *Heaven our Home*, and similar pulpy, flabby, unpractical writings of devout but dull persons. There are plenty of similar books of Roman Catholic origin, but they are nearly always confined to a couple of popular cults, those of the Blessed Virgin and of the Sacred Heart. The way to test them is that process of marking described above; and then to read in the same way, immediately afterwards, some book teeming with vigorous thought, such as Pascal's *Pensées*, which will exhibit a sufficiently forcible contrast. This kind of meditation is useless, because it is entirely unintellectual and unpractical, and is at best a mere lazy dreaming and castle-building, not bettered by the sacred character it assumes.

But the other kind of meditation, which is hurtful, is of a very different stamp. It is that based on the world-famed Ignatian method, devised by the celebrated founder of the Jesuits, the evil of which consists in its very thoroughness and admirable fitness for the end he had in view—namely, to break down the will of the neophyte. This is no place for a digression on the masterly system of the Exercises, nor for a panegyric on their vivid objectiveness and power of concentrating thoughts on the events of the Gospel story; and it will suffice to say that their one fault, if exclusively used, is that they force religious thought rigidly into one narrow channel, and thus, while largely increasing its accuracy, destroy its freedom and spontaneity. Teachers, who have themselves imbibed this method, fall into the grave mistake of minutely telling their pupils, whether verbally in retreats, or by written papers, not merely what is to be the general scope of their meditation, but precisely what each point and detail of it is to be; what sentiments are to be evolved, what resolutions are to be formed. And although this is not by any means a bad plan to follow in giving the two or three earliest lessons in the art of meditation, yet, when continuously pursued, it destroys intellectual action, and makes the mind of the pupil merely the passive recipient of the teacher's instruction; and it becomes purely mechanical, and of no more real use than would be a series of arithmetic lessons, consisting in setting the learner to copy down the answers to the problems from the key, without taking the trouble to work them out independently.

Meditation of the over-minute and dictated kind, then, is only useful on the hypothesis that the object aimed at is to impress the stamp of a particular teacher on his pupils, and to mould them absolutely to his will. But really salutary meditation, while borrowing freely from the skilful and methodized gradation of the Jesuit method, will leave far more to the individual mind, and will rather strive to strengthen its wings than to prescribe the direction of its flight. It would be well, therefore, after giving one or two specimen meditations, thoroughly worked out in writing, to the learners, to test their comprehension of the method by setting them to clothe a mere skeleton meditation (which

does no more than indicate the salient points) with suitable details, and this too in writing. When this has been done a few times with success, the student in spiritual learning ought to cast the paper aside, and make the meditation a purely internal effort of the understanding, unaided by outward helps. For the habit of mental prayer and profitable consideration of the great truths and duties of religion can be formed only by slow degrees, and yet are essential to any true realization of the religious life and continual sanctification of time in the frequent intervals of active and engrossing employment.

R. F. L.

(To be continued.)

'THE SEED IS THE WORD OF GOD.'

THE Sower sows His Seed ; alas ! it falls
Too often upon thankless barren soil,
Soon snatch'd away, soon rudely trodden down,
When Satan tempts, and earthbound fancies stray ;
Dried up by trials, chok'd by cares and joys,
So cold, so faithless are these hearts of ours.

Still, Lord, Thou sowest ; from that Precious Seed,
That Corn which fell into the ground and died,
There springs a blessed Harvest rip'ning still,
And gather'd in Thy Garner year by year.
Oh, who can count the wondrous increase o'er ?
Thou only, Lord, the Firstfruits, Thou⁷who know'st
The angel host by number and by name,
And willest, it may be, with christen'd men
To fill again the ranks by Satan thinn'd.

Yea, Lord, each sep'rate soul is known to Thee,
Each grain which Thou didst toil for here on earth,
With Sweat of Blood, and weariness, and pain,
And tedious anguish on the shameful Cross.
Thou dost see all ; the Virgin Mother blest ;
The chosen Twelve, the Captains of Thy host ;
The Martyrs, 'Wheat of God, ground' for His sake ;
The virgin followers of the Virgin Lamb ;
The tender band of stainless, chrisom babes ;
The souls once dyed with sin, now wash'd in Blood,
And loving much, for much has been forgiv'n ;
The hidden saints, known only to the Lord,
But precious in the sight of Him they serve ;
And they who shine as lights before the world,
Yet feel themselves all worthless, save through Him.

The rich, the poor, the simple, and the wise,
The noble and the peasant, king and slave,
The sick, the whole, the honour'd, and despised,
The hoary, bow'd, old man, the little child,
Young man and maiden, priest and man of war ;
Dwellers in distant lands and differing climes,
Unlike in time, and race, and speech, and birth,
Unknown each soul to each, but one in Christ,
In faith, in hope, in holiness, and love.

Such Harvest, Lord, is Thine, Oh, give us grace
Amongst those garnered Sheaves to find a place.

M. F. B. P.

THE
MONTHLY PACKET
OF
EVENING READINGS

For Members of the English Church.

AUGUST, 1875.

THE INCARNATION: ITS PLACE IN HISTORY.

καὶ γὰρ ἐὰν ὑψωθῶ ἐκ τῆς γῆς πάντας ἐλκύσω πρὸς ἐμαυτόν.—John xii. 32.

ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ κατοικεῖ πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος σωματικῶς.—Col. ii. 9.

‘ . . . It is necessary to everlasting salvation,’ says the Voice of undivided Christendom, ‘ that a man believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . ’ *

In other words, that every human creature should believe that on this earth there has existed a Man, not a mere messenger from God, or inspired by Him, but God Himself. Existing before creation, Author of created life, He became a ‘ creature,’ not laying aside His Divine Nature, but veiling it under human flesh. Being Infinite, He localized Himself ; became subject to the limits of time and place ; began His life by ordinary birth, and after passing through the stages of infancy, childhood, and youth, in which the human body, soul, and spirit gradually increased and developed their powers, He died in early manhood, by a violent death, inflicted by human hands.†

In order to understand Christ’s Life, we must begin at His Death, and read backwards, since it was only after His Cross and Passion that the mystery of His Incarnation and the teachings of His Life were made plain.

* ‘ He believes a virgin to be a mother of a son, and that very son of hers to be her Maker. He believes Him to have been shut up in a narrow room, whom heaven and earth cannot contain. He believes Him to have been born in time, Who was and is for everlasting. He believes Him to have been a weak child, carried in arms, Who is the Almighty ; and Him once to have died, Who only hath life and immortality in Himself.’—LORD BACON, *Christian Paradoxes*.

† ‘ La venue de Jésus-Christ n’est donc pas, comme on le juge ordinairement, un fait isolé—accidentel—et sans antécédents dans l’histoire du genre humain. Ce fait ne répond pas moins à tous les siècles qui l’ont précédé, qu’à tous ceux qui l’ont suivis. . . . En Lui rentrent tous les anciens temps, de Lui sortent tous les temps modernes.’—L’ABBÉ NICOLAS, *Etudes sur le Christianisme*, tom. ii. p. 221.

But we would, in this brief space, chiefly concern ourselves with the place in History of this stupendous Fact. No fact is wholly isolated, *i.e.*, every event, however trifling, every life, however lowly, has acted and re-acted upon others, producing effects which end only with Time itself; as from the smallest stone cast into the waters, the ripple must circle till it reaches the furthest shore.* This solemn thought helps us to see in the Incarnation the centre-point of all human history—the Alpha and Omega of human existence, without which that existence would be only a prolonged curse.

We would here state, in few words, our acquiescence in the theory (known in the middle ages as the Scotist),† that the Incarnation was not to be regarded as ‘the consequence’ of the Fall, but rather as the purpose of God from eternity. Sin could not turn aside or frustrate the mighty plan Love had made; it lent the bitter accidents, the dark shadows, bringing out into stronger relief the limitless love of God.‡ (Rom. v. 8.) What Christ’s work would have been in an unfallen world we cannot tell; the knowledge was left in Eden; but the mere presence of a sinless Being in a sinful world must stir the whole opposing force of hell against Him. Christ foreknew this, and—HE CAME.

From the moment when God said, ‘I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed,’ the coming of this Child of Man became the event of first importance upon earth. The Promise was carried downwards by single Patriarchs in succession till after the Deluge and dispersion of the builders of Babel. Eve’s exclamation, as it stands in the margin of our Bible, is noteworthy, ‘I have gotten the man from the Lord,’ Gen. iv. 1. Could it be that she thought the Deliverer was this—her first-born? If so, she knew not her own degradation, the full defilement and horror of sin, the barrier between her race and their God! Her words give a clue to a great mystery—the slowness of God’s mighty work. Why must He wait till sin and sorrow multiplied? He had a world to educate, to prepare for the Incarnation; and Old Testament Scripture is simply the inspired record of this preparation, carried on till the fulness of time.

From the time when Abraham’s family were specially chosen from among men to be Christ’s own nation, Scripture narrows itself, becoming almost exclusively Jewish history, other nations being noticed wherever

* ‘None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.’—Rom. xiv. 7.

† From Duns Scotus, as opposed to the Thomist, held by the followers of Thomas Aquinas. But we do not hold to the Scotist opinions on Vicarious Sacrifice; upon that we simply take the words of Scripture in their plainest and most literal sense—2 Cor. v. 21; 1 Peter ii. 24.

‡ ‘The Incarnation stands before us as one of the original projects (if I may so speak) of the Creator’s mind, in order to the completion of that mighty work of Creation which He was about to undertake: not as an expedient to meet an accident, but an original intention, more ancient than Creation itself—to which the creation of being and the permission of sin were but, as it were, the necessary preparations.’—EDWARD IRVING, *Second Sermon on the Incarnation*.

it is necessary to explain God's dealings with His own people. But God's purpose was not narrowed. The promise of Eden, given in more distinct terms to Abraham, ran thus : * 'In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ;' had his children duly considered this, their place in the world's history might be different now ; to the misapprehension of this truth we may trace their rejection of Jesus, and every subsequent suffering they have endured.

The Nation of Jesus ! Henceforward every noble Jewish character was to be a type of Him—was to show forth some truth connected with His coming, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David, Isaiah, and many besides—all prefiguring, each in his degree, the Son beloved, betrayed by brethren, yet freely pardoning ; the Giver of the Law, the Captain of the Host, the Shepherd and King : the 'Servant of the Lord,' the 'Man of Sorrows ;' in every sacrifice, ceremonial, chastisement, and deliverance of Israel, there was an underlying teaching, a never-ending prophecy, all converging to one point, and that—the Incarnation.

That every successive step of this teaching was needful we may learn from the Samaritan's ignorance of Messiah, save as a Teacher ; † here was an instance of an imperfect record causing an imperfect faith. Is there no warning here for Christians who in our own day undervalue or seek to disintegrate the Old Testament ?

Our own sense of the fatherly goodness of God in giving these records of His preparation for Jesus, is never greater than when we engage in the holiest duty and highest pleasure of Christian womanhood—the teaching of little children. As we lead them by picture, hymn, and story, to that stream 'whose shallows the lamb may ford, and whose deeps the elephant may swim,' we hope thus to lay, by the histories of that old, old Jewish world, the foundations of that love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and to make them, like God's saint of old, 'know from a child the Holy Scriptures.' ‡

Turn from the Jews to the Gentile world. Had they any yearnings for the Light, those people walking in darkness ? §

Not one Caucasian nation of any note or mark in history has been without a hope of a future Redeemer, who was to be an emanation—at least—from God. All, forsaking Him, fell into the most degraded heathenism ; and it may be held as universally true of Paganism, that a people cannot long remain better than their creed, and that, in sinking, they must drag that creed down. The early mythologies both of the East and of classic Greece are full of thought and power, but the more men tried to make their gods 'of like passions with themselves,' the worse both

* Gen. xxii. 18.

† The Samaritans accepted the Pentateuch only, so they were prepared for a 'Messias' who should be 'a Teacher ; but for nothing more. John iv. 25.

‡ 2 Tim. iii. 15.

§ 'Il n'y a eu aucun nation qui n'ait eu quelque expectation de cette espèce.'—*Etudes sur le Christianisme*, tom. ii. p. 138.

they and those gods became, till in fact they deified sensuality and sin. The practical horrors of idolatry were thus summed up in forcible words by the wise man : ‘ For the worshipping of idols, not to be named, is the beginning, the cause, and the end of all evil.’ But with increasing sin came deepening misery. The common feature of so many mythologies, the Serpent—the Evil Power to be crushed—is but an expression of the growing sense of the bondage of sin and the need of a Personal Deliverer, and even these fables, by God’s mercy, kept alive on earth, the hope which was to be fulfilled in the Incarnation. As religious rites became more depraved, the nobler and higher minds from polytheism turned to Pantheism ; a worse, because a more insidious foe to the truth Jesus was to teach, being utterly subversive of faith in a Personal God, and in the individuality of a soul.*

In the early Greek legends we have a striking relic of the Fall and the Promise in the tales of Prometheus and Pandora : he defying the wrath of the gods, chained and in torment, awaiting deliverance from Epaphus, son of Jove and Io ; she, through sinful curiosity, scattering multifold evils upon earth, yet retaining Hope in her fatal casket. A still more remarkable legend is that of Zagreus, the beloved child of Jove, slain as a propitiatory sacrifice to reconcile the gods of Olympus to their Great Father.†

In Egypt, Horus, descendant of the woman-serpent Isis, was to vanquish upon earth the Typhon ; later again the legend reappears in Gaul, with the remarkable addition that Horus was to be virgin-born.

As to Hercules, prince of dragon-slayers, he appears in nearly all mythologies in diverse forms ; but in Greece, the restoration by his means to the human race of the fair garden of the Hesperides, with its golden fruit, gives us another echo from a lost Eden.

In Persia, Mithras is the Mediator, who, after fierce combat, shall finally destroy Ahriman, the author of evil. Manicheism was the attempt to engraft Christianity upon this ancient belief, and we may remark of Persia that no form of heathenism was, as a whole, so pure, so free from degrading rites and incentives to human passion.

In India perhaps the most marvellously complex religious system has existed from the earliest antiquity ; and the amount of truth, vaguely held or strained after, is positively startling, in the midst of all that is licentious and cruel in practical worship ; for instance, in Brahma, the Eternal Father, sending forth his son Vishnu to repair the wrongs done on earth by the demon serpent, Kaly, Vishnu leaving his work to be completed by a third Power, Siva, otherwise Mahadeo, we almost discern the offices of the Trinity.

In Mexico the serpent Victor is Gentoo, in South America Puru ; in both he crushes a huge viper who deceived the mother of mankind, and vanquishes all lesser gods.

* Wisdom xiv. 27.

† Grote’s *History*, vol. i.

In Scandinavia many beautiful legends turned upon Thor, first born of Odin, the Mighty One, who, conquering the dragon Migdar, died in the moment of victory, to arise immortal in the Valhalla, or home of the heroes.

Besides all this, Greek poets tell of demigods and heroes, half-mortal, half-divine ; Plato of a Logos, Socrates of a Universal Teacher, Confucius, in the far east, of a Holy One, who later in time should purify the earth, and the Sybilline prophecies of a Universal Monarch would well nigh make us deem them inspired. All know the vision of the last Sybil on the Day of the Nativity. 'A golden circle round the sun, in which circle sat a beautiful maiden, who held in her lap a Child ; and the Sybil said to Octavius Cæsar, "This Child is greater than thou." And lo, a voice said in the capitol and in the Emperor's chamber, "This is the Altar of Heaven."' * Yes ! God had prepared the waiting earth. Here the events of history draw to a culminating point, the utter crumbling and giving way of all religious systems, the cessation of oracles, the growing license and corruption of manners, combined with the world-wide dominion of Rome, the currency of the beautiful language of Greece, the gradual scattering of Israel, the diffusion of the Septuagint, all these united to clear the way for a light shining in darkness, a message that should embrace all ; then a hush, a stilling of the nations, the forty years' closing of the temple of Janus, and on a winter's night, in Palestine, 'Unto us a CHILD IS BORN.'

'Nor war nor battle's sound
Was heard the world around ;
The idle spear and shield were high up hung :
The hooked chariot stood
Unstained by hostile blood ;
The trumpet spake not to the armed throng ;
And kings sat still with awful eye,
As if they surely knew their Sovran Lord was nigh.'

MILTON, *Christmas Ode*.

'On earth peace to men of good will' sang the choir of Heaven, and His glad Church on earth sings it still.†

The actual rejection, betrayal, and death of Christ are, of course, and ever must be, the crowning sin of Israel, the cause of their being blotted from among nations ; but let us pause for a moment over that rejection. We know its measure of guilt by Christ's own words, John xv. 22-24.‡ But do we of a later age duly estimate the strain made upon faith, when a man, known to them from infancy, stood up and claimed to be God ?

* Site of the Ara-Cœli Church, Rome.

† 'In terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis,' as the Vulgate gives it, following all the best MSS.

‡ 'If I had not come, and spoken unto them, they had not had sin ; but now they have no cloak for their sin.'

'If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin ; but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father.'

His kindred known, a fresh stumbling-block,* no external advantages, no recognition by those they were accustomed to look upon as teachers and guides;† and Nazareth was a real source of difficulty to those who ‘knew the scriptures.’‡

Men differ widely in their ways of first receiving truth. Some in all times, child-like and simple, take it up with an intuitive quickness which seems God’s gift to the lowly in heart;§ others again, like the noble minds of Berea, need to ‘search and see whether these things are so.’|| Patient, reverent inquiry will always bring out the truth, and those who thus learn it often prove its ablest teachers and defenders, having a respect for and power of dealing with scruples and difficulties they themselves have known; and that many such there must have been among the devout Jews of that day is beyond a doubt. Let us not too hastily condemn that generation. How do we receive truth in an unwelcome or an unaccustomed form? Are we always to be found advocating a good cause when it boasts no ‘great names’ on its side? And do we, ‘because right is right, follow right in the scorn of consequence,’¶ as was necessary for those who would be ‘followers of the Nazarene?’

God was upon earth in human flesh—this Man claimed to be God.

If those there be in our own day who can see in Him only a well-meaning visionary Enthusiast, how must it have been then? To contemporary spectators, not unwilling perhaps to receive Him, what a purposeless life it must have seemed! Earth’s Regenerator! why not make Himself known through all the earth? Why pass thirty out of thirty-three years’ short span in nameless obscurity, and the remaining three in wandering, poor and despised, through one remote conquered province of the Roman empire, unknown to the great men, the kings and sages of earth, unheard of in their schools of learning and centres of thought, the event that forced Him into public notice being His felon’s death—could mortal life be more colourless than this? yet He claimed to be God!

We have read the history in its true light; we know how He revealed thus the holiness of common life, the sacredness of home duties, the beauty of humility, the blessedness of poverty; we know that every pang, every indignity, endured by Him, as well as the hidden, voiceless life of Nazareth, has its teaching for all time; we know all this, but how could they know? To Jews in His own day, the very idea of a Saviour who could not save Himself was a stumbling-block; to the acute Greeks a teacher unknown to Philosophy, who started no new theories,

* ‘Is not this the carpenter’s son?’—Matt. xiii. 55.

† ‘Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees, believed on Him?’—John vii. 48.

‡ ‘Shall Christ come out of Galilee?’—John vii. 41, 42, 52.

§ ‘The meek will He guide in judgment; and the meek will He teach His way.’—Ps. xxv. 9.

|| Acts xvii. 11.

¶ ‘And because right is right—to follow right
Were wisdom—in the scorn of consequence.’—TENNYSON.

was foolishness; to those who came in child-like faith to this 'Man,' both Jew and Greek, He was Χριστὸν Θεοῦ δύναμιν καὶ Θεοῦ σοφίαν.*

There is a striking poem of our own day which thoroughly expresses what must have been a common state of feeling, supposed to be a letter from an Arab physician to a learned friend, soon after Our Lord's death, describing an interview with Lazarus, whose tale he considers that of a lunatic, though he grieves at the early death of one who promised fair to become a great Healer, had he not foolishly courted the opposition of the mob. In vain the writer turns to other topics—his acute mind is working on the theme. 'It is strange!' He recurs to it again, and at last breaks out:—

'The Very God! think, Abib, dost thou think?
So the All-Great were the All-Loving too.
So through the thunder comes a Human Voice,
Saying, "O heart I made, a Heart beats here!
Face, My Hands fashioned, see it in Myself.
Thou hast no power, nor mayst conceive of Mine,
But love I gave thee, with Myself to love.
And thou must love Me, Who have died for thee."
The madman saith He said so—it is strange.†

Yes, it is! but we can understand it by Christendom, as Karshish and his friend could not do.‡ The life of Humanity lives only in the Incarnation. National life, family life, social life, individual life, are now so inwoven with the Life of Christ, that in destroying that fact, we must annihilate all these. When we would know the worth of a man's life, or the measure of his work, be he scholar, soldier, statesman, or saint, we must read it in the light of that seemingly frustrated Life to estimate its value in the sight of God. As Adam at the head of the fallen, so Christ stands at the head of the Redeemed Creation—'ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κτίσεως τοῦ Θεοῦ.'§

Space forbids us to notice the early heresies, which all attacked the Incarnation; besides these, the only great falling away from Christianity was the Revolt of Islam in the seventh century. We shall only deal here with its effect, 400 years later, on Christian Europe, in exciting the Crusades; these we believe to have been, under God's merciful ruling, the greatest means of educating the chivalric life of Christendom. For we know that in a world of mixed good and evil, wars cannot cease, nor

* 1 Cor. i. 22—24.

† *Epistle of Karshish*, by R. B. Browning.

‡ Since the above was written, we have heard a striking statement from a Missionary, for thirty-four years labouring at Tinnevely, Southern India, as to the 'unconscious influence' of Christianity, and the difference of living in a land where 'Christ is not, among people 'without God in the world.' 'In a Christian land,' he said, 'even if we do not choose to own it, the very air we breathe is full of the presence of Christ—in a heathen land we breathe the contagion of godlessness and sin.' God has given them up to a reprobate mind, with all the fearful consequences of which the Apostle speaks (Rom. i.).

* 'The beginning of the creation of God.'—Rev. iii. 14.

would uninterrupted peace be a real boon ; was it not well, at the time when arms were strong, and weapons ready, and manners rude, that a common cause, and an unselfish one, should band nations together for the defence of the defenceless, and should lead to the foundation of all our European Orders of Chivalry ; should teach respect for helplessness, regard for man's honour and woman's purity, influencing for good the arms, the manners, and the social life of Europe, all through the Middle Ages ? Though later times have seen the 'spirit of pilgrimage' degraded and corrupt, and pandering to human sin and folly, yet, in its origin, it was an outcome of faith in the Incarnation, a love of the places where Jesus' feet had trod, and many a loving heart beat high with the sentiments Tasso puts into the lips of Godfrey of Bouillon :—

' Ma quando di sua aita ella ne privi
Per gli error nostri, or per giudizi occulti
Chi fia di noi, ch'esser sepulto schivi
Ove i Membri di Dio fur già sepulti ?
Noi morirem, nè invidia avremo ai vivi,
Noi morirem, ma non morremo inulti,
Nè l'Asia riderà la nostra sorte
Nè pianta fia da noi, la nostra morte !' *

What shall we say of him, of S. Louis of France, of de Joinville, of our own Cœur-de-Lion, the Black Prince, and his companions, of Lavalette and the Knights of Malta, of the Chevalier Bayard, and hundreds more ? What but that these noble knights and gentlemen were the fruits of Chivalry, and in the literature left us of their deeds and days, we may form some estimate of their value in the civilization and Christianizing of Europe.† In this literature, too, we find another striking truth ; place a Una or a Britomart beside any heathen conception, and we see how woman rose from her long and bitter degradation to take the place assigned her by God in Scripture—well for her if she keep it—not the equal of man, trespassing on his sphere and duties, not the idol or plaything of an hour, still less the slave, but as holding the second place, and so happy and honoured there, she need not wish to leave it—the complement of man, as wife, mother, daughter, sister, friend, with an ideal example of purity, lowliness, and womanly reticence, in Mary the Virgin—who cradled the Infancy of Jesus, and stood by Him when all men forsook Him and fled. Surely, too, another hallowed influence was in the very commemoration of the Nativity. Christmas ! What a wealth of innocent joy in its very name ! with its peculiar features of household mirth and large-hearted almsgiving, the special festival of the poor. It was well in feudal times, when great gulfs were fixed between the

* *Gerusalemme Liberata*, lib. ii. st. 86.

† Besides history and biography, such poems as Tasso's quoted above, *Orlando Furioso*, Chaucer, the *Faerie Quecn*, the *Romance of the Rose*, the *Host of Trouvères*, besides the tales of *Holy Guests*, beginning with the *Sangreal*, and all the chivalric literature of Germany from the *Nibelungenlied* to *Sintram*.

various classes of society, that such a season as this should bid lord and vassal make common cause and should draw them together :—

‘To hail with uncontrolled delight
And general joy the happy night
That to the cottage and the crown
Brought tidings of salvation down.’ *

Marmion, Introduction to Book vi.

One word touching Christian Art—its influence on noble national life will not be disputed. What would it, or could it be, without the Life of Christ? We do not say without religion, but without the Incarnation? The answer would require a separate essay; we only wish to say here how often we have been thankful that no authentic portrait of Our Lord ever could have existed. For no picture by Earth’s greatest master could have given us all of Christ, whereas every nobly-conceived one gives us somewhat of Him, leaving each one free to indulge in his own ideal.† But how truly each great nation has taken into itself the fact of His Humanity, we see as we study with delight the thoughtful and noble creations of every artist-land! The princely forms of Raffaele, Titian, Leonardo da Vinci, give us one aspect of Him; the weary, grief-stricken figures of Albert Dürer and Quintin Matsys give another—the Man in Tintoret’s pictures, the Child in John Bellini’s, how different—yet they are all Jesus! And to note how one or another scene in His life has been popular in different places, from some special local interest, *e.g.*, the fondness of the Venetian school for the Adoration of the Magi—surely owing to the legends on the subject brought back from the Nestorian Churches of the East by Marco Polo‡—and the frequent painting of the scenes in the Galilean ministry by the Flemish artists, who loved the sea;§ all, in short, incorporating the Life of Christ with their own national existence. To some of us, perhaps, arises a memory more vivid than pictured or sculptured likeness—a mountain valley, a peasant form, with sad, white face and shadowing dark hair, a silver-toned voice is in our ears; and again we gaze, as if upon a moving, breathing ‘fresco,’ and veil our faces, with thoughts too deep for tears, before the living Crucifix of Ammergau!

Time would fail, were we to attempt even to touch upon half the

* We are glad to recollect, that although Scotland, in gathering out her tares, rooted up much valuable wheat with them, and destroying this ‘element of civilization,’ to her own hurt, keeps no national Christmas; yet such an exquisite tribute to its blessed effects should be due to the pen of a Scottish poet so dear to us as Walter Scott.

† We think the most glorious Head of Christ we ever saw was a sketch in brown chalk, in the Brera, Milan, Leonardo da Vinci’s original design for his—now alas! ruined—fresco, the ‘Cenacolo’ in S. Maria delle Grazie.

‡ Col. Yule’s *Marco Polo*.

§ The Rubens pictures in Antwerp and Ghent alone testify to this—the scene from John xxi. 4. Though the day-dawn is on the German Ocean, and not the Sea of Galilee, it is intensely beautiful.

thoughts which crowd upon us as we ponder this mighty subject. We should have liked to speak of the influence upon the laws and secular government of Europe exercised by the Incarnation. But as we can only take one more point, it shall be that which concerns every human being in all ages, the Mystery of Suffering. There never lived a child of Adam wholly exempt from it, and yet the fact of its existence and its distribution among men was an unsolved enigma, driving many to scepticism and despair, till Christ 'drew all men to Himself.'* The Scriptures of the Old Covenant could not explain it. Had it been invariably the concomitant of sin, men might have understood it; but while Evil reigned triumphant, it seemed as if the noblest, purest, most innocent lives were those most marked for suffering. Many thought to understand this, but it was too hard for them. David found it so—he, who in his earthly sorrows likening himself to the hunted 'hind of the morning,' uttered the prophetic cry which, repeated by his Descendant from the Awful Cross, made the very sun grow pale.† Solomon spent his wisdom on the riddle in vain; the Book of Job, whose place in the canon of Scripture has been so disputed, is simply the cry of a soul pleading with its Maker, to know His purpose in thus permitting evil. Heathen at their very best could only meet it by Stoicism, and heretics by Manicheism; but all owned its existence and its sway—

“ ‘There is no God’—the foolish saith; but none—“There is no sorrow!’ ”

But when God's only-begotten Son took human nature on Himself, with all its deep capacity for pain of body and agony of spirit, the mystery was made plain to those who believed in Him. We all think much, probably, of the sufferings of His Death, do we sufficiently meditate upon the Life 'acquainted with grief'? His Death alone would have been atonement for the sin of the world, what was the intention of that most suffering Life? To think only of His three years' ministry; of the coldness, the deadness, the stupidity, the unwillingness, even of His own followers and friends; the misunderstanding and wresting of His words, the hindrance of His work, the empty professions, the half-heartedness; and further, betrayal by one friend, denial by another, desertion by all; the mental anguish of Gethsemane, before one rude touch had been laid upon Him—and then Calvary! What is there left for man to endure that Christ has not endured?

'O generous love! that He who smote
In man, for man, the foe,
The double agony in man
For man should undergo;
And in the garden secretly,
And on the Cross on high,
Should teach His brethren and inspire
To suffer and to die.'—*Dream of Gerontius.*

* John xii. 32.

† *Vide* heading to Ps. xxii.

Thus dignified by Him, sorrow became both the link between Him and humanity, and also that which binds man to man in universal brotherhood. It needed the suffering Manhood of God's own Son to teach us this ; no other revelation could have done it. Henceforward His servants would know how to meet sorrow for themselves, not with Stoic philosophy, but with the patience of the saints ; and how to meet it for others, not with mere philanthropy, but with that ' bearing of each others' burdens ' which best fulfils the law of Christ. Henceforward every deed of mercy to the least of His creatures would be ' done unto Himself,' and every act of violence or wrong be answered by a voice from the Throne, ' I am JESUS, whom thou persecutest.' Thus completely has He wedded our human nature, nourishing and cherishing His Church as His own Body—thus truly personal and individual is the love wherewith He loves every creature He has made and redeemed. Who that loves Christ would be without his part in the Cross ? The disciple would not be above His Master—rather, he rejoices in knowing that the very fact of his being Christ's stirs all the malice of evil powers against him. The higher a soul ascends to perfection, the more surely it must pass by the ' King's highway of the Cross ;' through Gethsemane, with human sympathy laid asleep, with the agony, it may be, of seemingly unanswered prayer, even to Calvary, where every lingering remnant of pride and self-will must die, and every thought be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.* Every good life, a suffering life, therefore, his own cross, be it of mind or body, is the last thing a Christian would part with, were he called to live his earthly life again. When sin is finally cast out, sorrow must die ; till then the closer do the saints cleave to the ' sweetest wood and sweetest iron ' of the Cross, by which, said the Apostle, ' the world is crucified to me, and I to the world ' (Gal. vi. 14). The heathen legend turned the mourning Niobe into stone ; the Christian mourner stands with the blessed Mother and beloved Disciple at the Cross and Tomb of Christ, and there is softened and comforted. No more chafing or struggling against sorrow, complaining or questioning with Omniscient Love ; he knows that, as in the expulsion from Eden, God veiled one great mercy, so, in the daily permission of Evil, He veils another. It teaches patience, draws out faith, kindles hope, offers the widest scope for charity ; it has schooled saints, and, as has been beautifully said, ' out of raw recruits has made veterans of the Cross.' Above all, it sends sufferers to Jesus as a man goes to his friend, it deepens faith in the Incarnation. Men may in prosperity talk and act as if they needed no God, or they may blindly adore Nature, mistaking God's Work for Himself, till they end in Pantheism ; but Sorrow's creed demands more than this—a Comforter, a Friend, a FATHER, a Personal God.

He who made, and knows the deep need of every human being, has then so ordered our lives, that all should have their part in that which will most surely send them to the sympathy of that Great Human Heart, of ONE, who chief of Sufferers and of Mourners here on earth, now offers Himself at the

* 2 Cor. x. 5.

All-Merciful Throne for the healing of the nations, till the long curse shall have passed away and the Lord God shall wipe off all tears from all faces.

‘Then, though our foul and limitless transgression
Grow in our growth, and in our breath began,
Raise Thou the Arms of endless Intercession,
JESUS ! divinest when Thou art most Man !’

L. D.

ODDS AND ENDS OF WEATHER WISDOM AND FRAGMENTS OF FOLK LORE.

MAY.

‘The winter it is past,
And summer’s come at last,
And the small birds sing on every tree.’

THOUGH I have already mentioned a few of the customs attached to the 1st of May which still linger among us, yet we have by no means said good-bye to May-day itself ; for, as it was a festival which belonged more especially to our Celtic forefathers, it therefore follows that the further north or west one gets the more traces are to be found of its real origin ; or, if this is too much to say, seeing that this is still questioned, at any rate of its antiquity. The south country May-garlands and jacks-in-the-green, though even these last are said to be relics of the Druidical assistants,* may, like the Furry day at Helstone, be thought to be a remains of the Roman Floralia, which was held towards the end of April ; but the Scotch Beltane, the Irish Bealtainn (yellow May-day),† the Cornish Bealtain, and the Welsh‡ Llan-y-ten, can obviously lay claim to a much more remote date, though opinions differ whether the festival was held, as Mr. Grant Stuart suggests in the Highland Superstition relative to Beltane Eve, in honour of *Pales*, the goddess of shepherds and protectress of the flocks, or of *Divona*, the patroness of wells, or whether it was held as a rejoicing for the departure of winter and the return of summer, or finally, whether it was in honour of the Phœnician Sun-god Bel. Much learning has been expended in support of this last suggestion by those

‘Learned philologists who chase
A panting syllable through time and space,
Start it at home, and hunt it in the dark,
Through Gaul to Greece, and into Noah’s ark.’

And Dr. Jameson‡ himself seems to incline to this opinion, for he says that it has been conjectured, with great appearance of probability, that

* Professor Burnet associates the curious basket of garlands with which he (Jack) is surrounded with the Druidical hunt for the mistletoe.—JABEZ ALLIES, *Worcestershire*, p. 431.

† In Ireland May-day is also called ‘La na Bealtina,’ and the eve is ‘Neen na Bealtina.’ The ‘eve’ and ‘ay’ of Beal fires.

‡ *Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language* (Beltane).

Druidism itself had its origin from the Phoenicians, and adds that one authority derives the name of 'Baldur, one of the Asi or Scandinavian deities, from Baal, or Bel, which signifies Lord';* but as the same worthy also thought that the Asagötter were called 'Asar,' or Asi, as being originally the companions of Odin in his expedition to Asia, it may be that the love of finding a derivation proved as ensnaring in the one case as it was in the other.

But whatever deity may have been originally propitiated at Beltane, the customs by which it is still kept are so totally distinct that it inclines one to the belief that not one but many great days which probably happened at this time of the year have got fused together, so that though the name may be derived from Baal, and the sun may lawfully lay claim to the three large fires which are still lighted, and of which mention is made in 'Jeannie Morrison':—

'The fire that's blawn on Beltane's Eve
May weel be black gin Yule.'

Yet the peaceful Pales is still remembered in the Highland shepherd's feast of eggs, milk, and cheese; and the watery Divona in the three days' visits to the holy healing wells, with which, in Ireland especially, every illness is, ought to be, or might have been, cured, or at any rate guarded against. Moreover, Beltain was not only kept on the eve of May-day, 'but the grand sacred fires of the Bel-Tine flamed on the three great festivals of the Druids (to wit—May Eve, Midsummer Eve, and the Eve of the first of November) in honour of Baal, or the sun. Two fires were kindled by one another on May-day Eve in every village of the nation, as well throughout all Gaul as in Britain, Ireland, and the lesser outlying islands, between which the men and beasts to be sacrificed had to pass; from whence came the proverb, Between Bel's two fires, meaning one in a great strait, not knowing how to extricate himself,'† which is equivalent to the more modern, 'Between the devil and the deep sea,' as applied to anyone who is between the horns of a dilemma, and has only a choice of evils.‡ There is another Scotch saying which shows that some sort of connection existed between the 1st and 8th of May, which is applied to any one born at this time—'You were born between the Beltanes (the 1st and 8th of May); you have skill in man and beast.'

The customs belonging to Beltane—the leaping through the fires, the black lot, the open-air feasts, the propitiatory offerings to the enemies of

* The Chaldee 'Bel' and the Hebrew 'Baal' alike mean Lord, and under these names worship was paid by the old Asiatics to the sun, whose light and heat-giving properties were typified by fires kindled on the top of high hills.

† Harland and Wilkinson's *Lancashire Folk Lore*.

‡ These fires were not always necessarily sacrificial. In the Highlands the cattle are still driven through the smoke of two fires to secure them from murrain.

the flock, such as the fox, the hoodie crow, and the eagle, in order that they might be induced to spare the sheep, have been too often recorded to be worth repeating, unless it is an old Irish custom, which is described in a MS. diary of the sixteenth century, and which is certainly highly characteristic. 'Upon Maie Eve they (the Irish) will drive their cattell upon their neighbour's corne to eat the same upe. The are wont to begin from the east, and this principally upon the Englische churl.' (So that there was some method in their madness, at any rate). 'Unless they do so upon Maie Daie, the witches have power upon their cattell all the yere following.'*

With regard to witches, I cannot find that our English hags (who were, indeed one might almost say are,† neither few nor far between) had any special gathering on May Eve or May Day, like their German fellows, though they might possibly have joined them, at least if they cared to put to sea in their egg-shell boats, for I remember when I was a child being directed always to break the bottom of an egg shell after I had eaten the contents, to prevent the witches crossing the water; and I have often watched an old servant of my grandmother's who used to go round and examine the egg-shells to see if this ceremony had been properly performed. If it had been omitted he would always do it himself, with many shakes of the head over the carelessness of the person who had neglected to take this precaution. Certainly, now, if ever the German witches must have been glad of some visitors, as they were expected to dance away the snows from off the Blocksberg on the 1st of May; indeed, there is a saying still current in North Harz, that the witches return in twelve days, then must the snow be away. The German cats are also protected at this time, thanks to their evil name, for on Walpurg's Eve no cat may be teased or admitted into the house, for it may be a witch; while, if any one wishes to know who of his acquaintances are witches, he has only to place himself in a cross way on May night, cut a piece of turf and lay it on his head, and then they can do him no harm; but woe betide him if the turf should come off, for he cannot possibly escape alive unless he consent to become a witch himself.

Freshly-cut turf is a preservative against witchcraft, both in England and Scotland, and so too is old iron, particularly a horse-shoe; but the best of all is a piece of rowan, or mountain ash. This latter antidote is mentioned in the ballad of the *Laidly Worm of Spendleheugh*, where, when the evil stepmother endeavoured by witchcraft to prevent the prince coming to the rescue of his enchanted sister, she found that—

* *Notes and Queries*, First Series, vol. vii. p. 81.

† Witness the prayer which I have been told is still used by the Wiltshire peasants—

'From Witches and Wizards,
And long-tail Buzzards,
And things that run at the bottom of the hedge,
Good Lord deliver us !'

' Her spells were vain, the boys returned
To the queen in sorrowful mood,
Crying that witches have no power
Where there is rowan tree wood.'

For the prince had taken the precaution of having his ship built of the mountain ash.

Another rhyme asserts that—

' Rowan tree and red thread
Haud the witches a' in dread,'

or else—

' Put the witches to their speed.'

while—

' Vervain and dill
Hinder witches of their will.'

The name Rowan is said by Dr. Jameson to be derived from the old Norse *runa*, a secret,* or charm, on account of its being supposed to have power to avert the evil eye, and consequently one of the most approved charms against caulrips and spells, was a branch of the Rowan tree, planted and placed over the byre ; for this sacred tree cannot be removed by unholy fingers. In the north of England the second of May is called Rowan tree day, or Rowan tree witch day, and on that day the method of proceeding is for some member of the family to go, the first thing in the morning to the nearest Rowan, and take a sufficient supply of branches, and, (a different path back having been taken by the strict observers from that by which they went) on reaching home, twigs are stuck over every door in the house or homestead, and scrupulously left there till they fall out of themselves ; and if, added to this, two pieces of elder are nailed crossways over the front door, and a piece of red worsted tied round the left arm, then there is nothing further to fear, for it is well known that witches have an invincible dislike to anything red, because it is the colour of blood. However, we must leave 'the cunning women,' and return to May-day. In former times it was thought to be essential, if you wanted a good complexion, to wash your face in May dew which had been gathered before the sun had risen,† otherwise it would be of no use ; and Pepys, in his 'Diary,' tells how, in May, 1667, 'My wife (went) away down, with Jane and W. Hewer, to Woolwich, in order to a little ayre, and to lie there to-morrow, and so gather May-dew to-morrow morning, which Mrs. Turner had taught her is the only thing in the world to wash her face with, and I am contented with it.' Other

* The word *runn*, from Sanskrit, *ru*, murmur, means a secret. A 'run wita' was a private secretary, one who knew his master's secrets ; and from the same word was derived *rynan*, to whisper. *Runa*, a whisperer, in earlier times, meant a magician, and *run stafas*, mysterious staves ; from this last word the name 'rune' came naturally to be applied to the tree from whence such staves were usually cut.

† It was long an article of popular faith, that a maiden washing herself with dew from the hawthorn on the 1st of May at day-break would preserve her beauty for the rest of her life. Hazlitt and Brand's *Popular Superstitions*, vol. i. p. 156.

people, who were not so early abroad as Mrs. Pepys, ran a very good chance of being greeted with the reproach :—

‘ Rise up fair maidens, fie for shame,
I’ve been five long miles from hame ;
I’ve been gathering garlands gay,
Rise up, fair maids, and take in your may.’

While in Cheshire and Lancashire (according to a writer in *Notes and Queries*, vol. v. First Ser. 581) there was a custom of placing small branches of trees at the doors of houses in which any maidens were living. They were supposed to be emblematical of the character of the damsels for whom they were intended, and had a well-understood meaning of their own, which was, as may well be imagined, not always complimentary. For instance, a nut meant a slut ; a wicken (the local name for a mountain ash) my dear chicken ; an oak, a joke ; a hawthorn, held in scorn, &c. I have already mentioned the visits to the holy-healing wells, in Ireland ; but in the south of England, if a child has the whooping cough, it is thought that it can be effectually cured if, on the first three days of May, it is lifted three times over the nearest water, no matter whether it is well, ditch, or pump ; but it must not be allowed to cough during the process, otherwise the charm is ineffectual ; while in Cornwall many of the poor people believe in the efficacy of the water of St. Madron’s Well (the most celebrated of all the holy wells of Cornwall), for on the first three Sundays in May they take their sickly children to the baptistery that they may be strengthened and cured by the immersion. After the visit small pieces of rag will be found fastened to the surrounding bushes ; but this is always done when any holy wells are visited either in Scotland or Ireland.* Besides May-water, the new May moon is thought to have a wonderfully good effect on invalids, but then it must be aided by certain charms, which are known to very few people. Indeed, I have been told of a poor man who had gone all the way from Sussex to Dorsetshire on foot, to consult ‘ a wise man ’ who lived in the latter county, and who was the only possessor of the charms, which moreover can only be used in the month of May ; and, according to my informant, the process principally consisted in the patient having his eyes fixed on the moon at the moment when a box of ointment, made from herbs which had been gathered when the moon was full, was given him.

In the island of Lewis there is a curious custom belonging to May-day. A man is sent to cross the Barvas river very early every year on this day, in order to prevent any women crossing it first, for that the inhabitants say would hinder the salmon from coming into the river all the year round. They pretend to have learnt this from a foreign sailor who was

* Sir W. Betham, in his *Gaul and Cymbiri*, explains how wells are now venerated in Ireland, and traces their worship back to remote ages and to the east by way of Spain, Carthage and Egypt, Tyre and Sidon, Arabia, Chaldea and Persia, where men still hang bits of rag on trees near wells.

shipwrecked upon that coast a long time ago. This observation they maintain to be true from experience.

There is only one more practice connected with the first of May that I shall mention—the way in which it is kept at Magdalen Tower in Oxford, an account of which was lately given in the *Times*.^{*} At day-break the choristers assemble at the top of the tower and sing a Latin hymn † as the sun rises. The origin of this custom is, I believe, as follows:—Before the Reformation a mass was performed every May-day morning on the top of this tower for the repose of the soul of Henry VII., who honoured the College with a visit in 1488. Certain pieces of choir music are still performed on the same place and on the same day, at five o'clock in the morning, for which harmonious ceremony the rectory of Slymbridge, in Gloucestershire, pays the yearly sum of 10*l*. The inhabitants of Oxford, however, have another version of the story. They say that long ago certain estates were given to the college on condition that a mass was to be said on behalf of the benefactor on the first of May, and that if this mass were omitted, the estates were to lapse. At the Reformation they could not say the mass in the chapel, so they went to the top of the tower and sung it at day-break. After the hymn has been sung the chorister boys throw down eggs, said to be those of jack-daws and starlings, collected from the tower, upon the crowd, and the people then begin to blow tin horns with long and loud blasts. It is said by some that the origin of this custom was to drown the sound of the mass which was being sung at the top of the tower. There is a somewhat similar practice at Durham, where on the 29th of May the choir ascend the large tower of the cathedral and sing anthems from three sides of it. This is done in remembrance of the monks chanting masses from it in behalf of Queen Philippa when engaged in the sanguinary battle of Redhills (or Neville's Cross) with the Scottish king, David II., 1346. The reason given why anthems are only sung from three sides of the tower and not from the fourth is, that a chorister once overbalanced himself, and falling over was killed.

The 8th of May is the before-mentioned 'Flora or Furry-day' ‡ at Helstone, when all the Helstone folks wear flowers and form a 'halanlow,' which means in Cornish a procession for walking the boundaries. Neither Hone nor Brand take any notice of the customs which yet are singular enough. The best account (that I have seen) is given in the autobiography of a Cornish rector, where he says:—'The *fête* began at day-break with ringing the church bells, the sound of which commingled oddly with the clang and clash of frying-pans and kettles, and the braying of trumpets

^{*} *Times*, May 1, 1875.

[†] I have been told that Milton's *Ode* beginning

'Now the bright morning star, day's harbinger,'

is the hymn chosen.

[‡] Some writers derive the name from the old Cornish word *fer*, which signifies 'a fair,' or 'festival.'

and bullock horns. As the sounds died away, in the distance was heard the strains of the furry song, of which I only remember two verses :—

‘ Robin Hood and Little John
They both have gone to the fair O,
And we’ll go to the merry green wood
To see what they do there O.

‘ For we were up at early morn
To fetch the summer home O,
For summer’s come at last
And winter is agone O.*

‘ (Where are those Spaniards
That made so great a boast O?
They shall eat the grey goose feather
And we will eat the roast O.

‘ As for the brave St. George,
St. George he was a knight O,
Of all the knights in Christendom
St. Georgy is the right O.

‘ God bless Aunt Mary and Moses
And all her power and might O,
And send us peace in merry England
Both day and night O.’)

‘ At nine o’clock the revellers appeared in front of the Grammar School and demanded a holiday for the boys, after which they collected offerings from house to house, and then faded (*i.e.* went) into the country returning about noon, with flowers and branches in their caps and hats. We were not prepared for what followed, bursting open the street door, a well-looking man and maid danced into the house and through it, followed by an endless string of couples. The tune to which they danced was this as well as I can remember :—



‘ They had not been in the house a minute when Richard, offering his hand to a girl who was staying with us, dashed into the middle of the dancers, leaving Catherine and me to follow at the tail of the procession. . . . At sunset the dancers retired to prepare for a ball at the Assembly Rooms, with which the festivities were concluded. . . .’

Though there are no longer any May-poles among us—for was not the last begged by Sir Isaac Newton as a stand for his great telescope—yet their memory is still retained in many of our school children’s games.

* I have supplied the other three verses from another source.

For instance, who that has ever been made perfectly dizzy by serving as a living May-pole at a school feast can forget the

‘ All around the May-pole, trit, trit, trot,
See what a May-pole I have got,
One at the bottom two at the top,
All around the May-pole, trit, trit, trot,’

which seems an endless delight to the infant mind ; while the Scotch

‘ Here we go by jingo ring
About the merry Ma tanzie,’

is also said to be another version of the same ; and so too is the

‘ Here we go gathering nuts in May,
On a cold and frosty morning,’

of the elder classes.

All the proverbs about the first turn on the weather, for

‘ S’il pleut le premier Mai,
Le bœuf gagne et le cochon perd,’

because the meadows will give more hay than the oak acorns ; while in Haute Saône it is said,

‘ Quand il pleut le premier jour de Mai,
Les vaches perdent moitié de leur lait ;

and in Picardy, ‘ S’il pleut la nuit de Mai, il n’y a point des cerises ;’ while, if the first happens to be stormy, they say in England that ‘ St. Philip and St. James have had a quarrel.’

The 3rd of May is the Invention of the Cross, the Scotch Holyrood Day, when the Yorkshire folk hold that

‘ If dry be the buck’s horn on Holyrood morn
’Tis worth a kist of gold ;
But if wet be seen on Holyrood e’en,
Bad harvest is foretold ;’

while in Scotland,

‘ If the hart and the hind meet dry and part dry on Rood-day fair,
For sax weeks of rain there’ll be nae mair ;’

and at Bergamo, if it rain on Holyrood Day, you must not reckon on your nuts. Moreover there is a French rule with regard to bean sowing at this time which it may be as well to remember :—

‘ Seme les haricots à la Sainte Croix,
Tu en récolteras plus que pour toi.
Sème les à le Saint Gengoult (May 11),
Un t’en donnera beaucoup.
Sème les à Saint Didier,
Pour un tu auras un milier.’

One would give a good deal to be able to believe, as firmly as one used to do in early days that S. Helena, the mother of Constantine, and the discoverer of the Holy Cross, was a British Princess, the daughter of the King of Colchester, the very old King Cole, that jolly old soul, com-

memorated in the nursery rhyme. But facts are stubborn things, and so, though the tradition that she was a native of this country is almost universal, and seems to be confirmed by her popularity here as a patron saint during the Middle Ages, seventy-two churches having been dedicated in her name, one must, I suppose, cede all claim to her. Still, whether British or Bythnian, the story goes that she undertook a journey into Palestine in 326, at the age of eighty, and on her arrival at Jerusalem she was inspired with a great desire of finding the Cross on which our Blessed Lord had suffered. She ordered the Temple of Venus, which profaned the supposed site, to be pulled down; and on digging to a great depth, they discovered three crosses, not knowing, which was the Cross of our Blessed Lord. The holy Bishop Macarius suggested to S. Helena to have the three crosses carried to a lady who was extremely ill. The crosses were singly applied to the patient, who perfectly recovered at the touch of the True One, though the others had been tried in vain. Another legend says that it was a dead person to whom the crosses were applied; the third restoring the body to life. S. Helena, according to Gregory, Bishop of Tours, who gives as his authorities Theodoretus and S. Ambrose, 'took care that some of the nails* should be artificially inclosed within the emperor's helmet, that thereby his head might be preserved safe from his enemies' weapons, and others she mingled with the iron of his horse's bit, thereby both to give a safe protection to him, and likewise to fulfil the antient prophecy of Zacharius, saying "*That which is on the horse's bit shall be holy to the Lord Omnipotent;*" and one she cast into the Adriatic sea, during a horrible tempest, by which means she not only saved herself and company from shipwreck, but greatly moderated all future storms.'

The 5th of May, though it has no particular Saint belonging to it in the English Calendar, has a French prophecy attached to it.

'Lorsqu'il pleut le 5 Mai,
Il n'y a point de noix.
Lorsqu'il pleut le 15 Juin,
Il n'y a pas de raisins.
Lorsqu'il pleut à le Saint Barnabé (June 11),
Il n'y a d'avoine partout ou on a semé.'

May 6th is S. John ante Portam Latinam, being so called on account of the legend that S. John the Evangelist was in his old age sent for to Rome by Domitian, and there before the gate called the Porte Latina, was put into a cauldron of boiling oil, from which he suffered no injury. Before this a cup containing poison had been given him, but he drove the poison out in the shape of a snake or dragon, and drank it unhurt; and he was then banished to the Island of Patmos. The Flemish people call this day 'Klein Jan voor het waelche portent, or St. Jans in d'olie' (S. John in the oil), and believe that there will be fine

* The iron crown of Lombardy was said to be made of these nails.

† *Clavis Cel.* p. 243.

weather if an east wind blows on this day. They also say S. John can, if he likes, give six fine days to the labourers. At Nivière they hold :—

‘S’il pleut le jour du petit S. Jean,
Toute l’année s’en ressent,
Et notamment jusqu’au grand S. Jean.’

Cold weather is expected on the Continent about the middle of May, for ‘à la mi-Mai queu d’hiver’; and in Italy the peasants call this season ‘l’univerno dei cavalieri’; while in France the three Saints, Mamertius, Pancratius and Servatius, whose festivals fall on the 11th, 12th, and 13th, are called ‘Ice Saints’; and there is a proverb which says :—

‘S. Mamert, S. Pancrace, et S. Servais,
Sans froid les saints de glace ne vont jamais.’*

The Bohemians, according to Mr. Swainson, have made a special Saint of their own, whom they call Pan Serboni† (a name composed of the first syllables of Pancratius, Servatius, and Boniface), and of whom they say that Pan Serboni withers the trees (with frost); but in Belgium, on the contrary, there is a proverb that Saint Pancratius said to Saint Servatius, ‘After my festival there shall be no more night-frosts’; and in the Saabthal near Nürnberg, these three Saints are called ‘Weindiebe,’ or the Wine-stealers.

According to Mr. Campbell (*Pop. Tales, West Highlands*), the night following the 13th of May, or May-day old style, is a particularly busy day with both fairies and witches, and every herd and dairy maid and canny housewife used various arts to ward off the many evils that the enemy had the power of inflicting. The favourite device, which I have often seen used, was putting a little tar in the right ear of every cow in the byre; but all these charms had some reason, and the original reason for this probably arose from the fact that tar has a disinfecting quality, and used in former time to be put on clothing and under the arms of any person who had to go into a house where there was any infectious disease.

The 19th is St. Dunstan’s Day, and though he has no proverb, there is a tradition that this Saint once made a quantity of beer, but was at a loss how to dispose of it, till the devil appeared to him and offered to blight all the apples,‡ and enhance the value of S. Dunstan’s ale by stopping the cider supply on the usual condition of an assignment of the Saint’s soul. St. Dunstan stipulated that the trees should be blighted in

* Swainson’s *Weather Folk Lore*, p. 97, *et interim*.

† It would appear from this that Pan Serboni must be a near relation of our own English St. Pawsle, whose name does not occur in the *Calendar*. It is said in praise of a thing that it is for a better day than Sunday—for St. Pawsle’s eve. The name is probably a Yorkshire corruption of the Apostle’s.

‡ ‘The devil was well known to have a special power over apples (see Garnet’s *Histoire de la Magie en France*, p. 176), and it was consequently a brilliant suggestion of De Lencre’s that the witchcrafts about Bordeaux might be connected with the number of orchards in that neighbourhood.’—LECKY’S *Ries &c. of Rationalism in Europe*, p. 4.

three days, which fell on the 17th, 18th, and 19th of May, his own day being the last of these. It is said that the Devonshire apple-growers still watch the weather at this time with great anxiety as to their orchards, and attribute the untoward weather about this time to the Devil's compact with the Saint. The tradition does not tell us how the Saint got out of his agreement; perhaps the devil was coming to claim the performance of his promise, when he 'appeared when the Saint was working at his anvil, and that the sudden agitation of a vessel of holy water, showing who he was, St. Duncan tooke up a paire of pinchers that lay by him, and caught the foule beaste by the upper lippe, and so holding him fast, and leading him uppe and downe his chamber, after many and divers interrogations, drove him awaye.'

Next on the list comes the 25th, St. Urban's Day, a great day upon the Continent, for St. Urban is the patron and guardian of the vineyards, though his *protégés* did not always treat him with due respect, it must be owned, for if it rained on his day, the vine-dressers in South Germany feared a bad season, and used therefore to throw his image into the nearest pool, from which practice came the saying:

'Wenn Sanct Urban kein gut Wetter gebt,
'Wird er in die Pfritzen geleit.'

Another proverb says that if it rains on St. Urban's Day every ear of corn loses a grain, while as the cold nights are supposed to end with the festival of this Saint in Bohemia, it is said that St. Urban drives his mother from the stove.

Our own S. Augustine has no proverb, but S. Philip of Neri, who is also commemorated upon the 26th, is better off, for at Bergamo, it is said: 'If it rain on San. Felep's day, the poor man has no need to beg of the rich.' Possibly what English readers chiefly remember about this Saint, is that:

'St. Philip Neri, as old legends say,
Met a young stranger in Rome's streets one day,
And being ever courteously inclined
To give young folks a sober turn of mind,
He fell into discourse with him, and thus
The dialogue they held comes down to us;'

while his concluding piece of advice—

'For that which must be first of all provide,
Then think of that which may be, and indeed
When well prepared, who knows, you may succeed;'

was certainly sound.

The 27th, which belongs to the venerable Bede is also a blank with regard to proverbs, though there is one, or rather two, traditions which tell how the prefix *venerable* was bestowed on him. One story says that when blind he preached to a heap of stones, thinking himself in a church, and the stones were so much affected by his eloquence and piety, that they answered, 'Amen, *venerable* Bede, Amen.' The other story is that

‘His scholars being desirous of placing on his tomb an epitaph in rhyme, one wrote :—

‘Hac sunt in fossa
Bedæ presbyteri ossa.’

But this not being approved of, the composer struck out the word ‘Presbyteri,’ and fell asleep while he was trying to think of a better one, and while he slept an angel filled up the blank with the word ‘Venerabilis.’

The 29th of May is Oak-apple day *—i.e., the Restoration of Charles II. ; and according to Brand it is still customary, especially in the North of England, for the common people to wear in their hats the leaves of the oak, which are sometimes covered with leaf gold. This is done as everybody knows in commemoration of the marvellous escape of Charles II. from those that were in pursuit of him, who passed under the very oak-tree in which he had secreted himself after the Battle of Worcester. For the same reason it was the custom some years back to decorate the monument of Richard Pendrele, in the churchyard of St. Giles-in-the-Fields, London, with oak-branches on the 29th of May ; but most quaint of all is the song which used annually to be sung and ‘learnt’ to all the population of Wooley, a little village near Bath, and of which I saw an account given in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* a few years ago.† The clerk’s wife prided herself on teaching it to the little flock who met at her house for Sunday School ; and on the 29th of May they walked in procession, headed by the biggest boy, carrying an oak branch, into which a smaller boy mounted on their arrival at our house, in the neighbouring village of Swanswick. The song was begun, I think as a solo, and finished in chorus, whenever the 29th of May was mentioned. The following is an accurate copy, transcribed by the unlettered muse which preserves the local pronunciation of some of the words ; but the remembrance of them and the custom are fast dying out, now that good Mrs. Caswell is no more :

‘O let us sing of ancient days, and never to forget,
For the martyrs of our Royal King it makes us to regret,
In consequence of the Papist race and for to maintain their pride
The Royal King of England they killed and sacra’fid.

‘This villany people was determin’d the family to destroy,
But the kind hand of Providence did their evil works annoy.
For the great escape of the Royal Prince which happened on this day,
A loyal day for to be kep is the 29th of May.

‘For when the King, his father, he was condemned to die,
He called for his children all and wished them all good-bye,
We never forget the tears that fell upon that fatal day,
King Charles the Second restored the crown on the 29th of May.

‘Now when the King was dead and gone, the Prince could not be found,
Altho’ they searched everywhere, with many a huge sound,
He was preserved in a oak, in a Royal Oak, I say,
King Charles the Second enjoyed his own on the 29th of May.’

* In Hampshire it is called Shik-Shak Day. No reason has been assigned for this.—ED.

† Vol. 7. p. 363, New Series, 1867.

Nothing can equal the conciseness of this historical summary. It is almost worthy of the author of :—

‘ No science to me is a mystery,
I’ve read every book through and through,
But I always was fondest of history,
Because we all *know* that *that’s* true ;’

and certainly of the conclusion :—

‘ Charles the Second got up in the oak,
He saw humpty-back Richard go under,
But never’s the word he spoke.’

Another ‘ oak-apple.’ custom still survives at Egton-cum-Newton, and Newton-in-Cartmel, where the day itself is called ‘ oak bob day ;’ and if any children are found without ‘ saplings’ on that morning, they are compelled to make a bob, by having their hair pulled until their obeisance is deemed sufficient, while at Newcastle the two rhymes,

‘ Royal Oak the Whigs to provoke,’

and

‘ Plane tree leaves, the Church folks are thieves,’

are all that remain, and probably these customs have lingered longer in the North of England than anywhere else, because :

‘ The oak, the ash, and the bonny ivy tree
They flourish best at home in the North countrie.’

With regard to the oak, apart from the king, there is a common saying :—

‘ If the oak’s before the ash
Then you’ll only get a splash,
But if the ash is before the oak,
Then you may expect a soak ;’

or, as another version puts it :—

‘ If the oak’s before the ash
The farmer’s pockets are full of cash,
But if the ash is before the oak
The farmer’s hope will end in smoke.’

B. C. C.

THE THREE BRIDES.

BY CHARLOTTE M. YONGE.

CHAPTER XX.

VIVIENNE.

‘ Of all the old women that ever I saw,
Sweet bad luck to my mother-in-law.’

Irish Song.

THE Parliamentary Session had reached the stage that is ended by no power save that of grouse, and the streets were full of vans fantastically decorated with baths, chairs, bedsteads, and nursery gear.

Cecil could see two before different house-doors, as she sat behind her muslin curtains, looking as fresh and healthful as ever, and scarcely more matronly, except that her air of self-assertion had become more easy and

less aggressive now that she was undisputed mistress of the house in London.

There was no concern on her part that she was not the mother of either of the two latest scions of the house of Charnock. Certainly she did not like to be outdone by Rosamond ; but then it was only a girl, and she could afford to wait for the son and heir ; indeed, she did not yet desire him at the cost of all the distinguished and intellectual society, the concerts, soirées, and lectures that his non-arrival left her free to enjoy. The other son and heir interested her nearly, for he was her half-brother. There had been something almost ludicrous in the apologies to her. His mother seemed to feel like a traitor to her, and Mr. Charnock could hardly reconcile his darling's deposition with his pride in the new-comer. Both she and Raymond had honestly rejoiced in their happiness and the continuance of the direct line of Dunstone, and had completed the rejoicing of the parents by thorough sympathy, when the party with this unlooked-for addition had returned home in the spring. Mr. Charnock had insisted on endowing his daughter as largely as he justly could, to compensate for this change in her expectations, and was in doubt between Swanmore, an estate on the Backsworth side of Willansborough, and Sirenwood itself, to purchase and settle on her. Raymond would greatly have preferred Sirenwood, both from its adjoining the Compton property and as it would be buying out the Vivians ; but there were doubts about the involvements, and nothing could be done till Eleonora's majority. Mr. Charnock preferred Swanmore as an investment, and Raymond could, of course, not press his wishes.

A short visit had been made at Dunstone to join in the festivities in honour of the little heir, but Cecil had not been at Compton since Christmas, though Raymond had several times gone home for a Sunday when she had other companionship. Charlie had been with them preparing his outfit for India, whither he had been gone about a month, and Frank, though living in lodgings, was the more frequently at his sister-in-law's service, because wherever she was the Vivian sisters might be looked for.

No sooner had Raymond taken the house in — Square than Lady Tyrrell had engaged the opposite one, so that one household could enjoy evening views of the other's interior, and Cecil had chiefly gone into society under her friend's auspices. Her presentation at Court had indeed been by the marchioness ; she had been staying with an old friend of Mrs. Poyndsett's, quite prepared to be intimate with Raymond Poyndsett's wife, if only Cecil would have taken to her. But that lady's acceptance of anyone recommended in this manner was not to be thought of, and besides, the family were lively, merry people, and Cecil was one of those who dislike and distrust laughter, lest it should be at themselves. So she remained on coldly civil terms with that pleasant party, and though to a certain degree following her husband's lead as to her engagements, all her ways were moulded by her friend's influence. Nor was the effect other-

wise than becoming. Nothing could be in better taste than all in Mrs Charnock Poyntsett's establishment. and London and Lady Tyrrell together had greatly improved her manners. All her entertainments went off well, and she filled her place in the world with grace and skill, just as she had always figured herself doing.

Yet there was a sense of disappointment and dissatisfaction, which increased upon her as the time drew nearer for returning, to be again only a guest in her married home. It was a tangible grievance on which her mind could fix itself. Surely it was hard on her that her husband should require it of her, and yet she perceived that he could not avoid it, since his mother was mistress. She knew too that he was unfailingly kind, attentive, and indulgent, except on that one occasion when he had sharply reproved her for her behaviour in the Tallboys matter; and strange to say, a much stronger feeling towards him had been setting in ever since that one time when she had seen him thoroughly angry. She longed and craved to stir that even, gentle courtesy, to frowns or smiles, and yet there was a perversity in her nature that seemed to render it impossible to her to attempt to win a smile from him, far more so to lay aside any device or desire of her own to gratify him. All she did know was, that to be all that her ambition had sought, a Charnock by marriage as well as birth, and with a kind, considerate husband, was not enough to hinder a heart-sickness she had never known or supposed possible.

Presently, through the flowers in her balcony, Cecil saw the opening and closing of the opposite house-door, and a white parasol unfurled, and she had only time to finish and address her letter to Mrs. Duncombe before Lady Tyrrell was announced.

'Here I am, after a hard morning's work, winding up accounts,' &c.

'You go to-morrow?'

'Yes, trusting that you will soon follow; though you might be a cockney born, your bloom is town-proof.'

'We follow as soon as the division on the Education Question is over, and that will not be for ten days. You are come to look at my stores for the bazaar; but first, what are you going to do this afternoon?'

'What are your plans?'

'I must leave cards at half-a-dozen people's at the other end of the park. Will you come with me? Where is Lenore?'

'She is gone to take leave of the Strangeways' party; Lady Susan insisted on having her for this last day. Poor Frank! I confess impartially that it does not look well for him.'

'Poor Frank!' repeated Cecil, 'he does look very forlorn when he hears where she is.'

'When, after all, if the silly boy could only see it, it is the most fortunate thing that could happen to him, and the only chance of keeping his head above water. I have made Lady Susan promise me two of her daughters for the bazaar. They thoroughly know how to make themselves useful. Oh, how pretty!'

For Cecil was producing from the shelves of various pieces of furniture, a large stock of fancy articles—Swiss carvings, Spa toys, Genevese ornaments, and Japanese curiosities, which, as Lady Tyrrell said, ‘rivalled her own accumulation, and would serve to carry off the housewives and penwipers on which all the old maids of Wil’sbro’ were employed.’

‘We must put out our programmes,’ Cecil added; ‘people will not work in earnest till the day is fixed, and they know the sellers.’

‘Yes; the lady patronesses are most important,’ said Lady Tyrrell, writing them down; ‘Mrs. Raymond Charnock Poyndsett; Lady Rosamond, eh?’

‘Oh no, Julius won’t hear of it.’

‘And opposition is sweet: so we lose her romantic name, and the stall of the three brides. Mrs. Miles Charnock is too much out of the world to be worth asking. Then myself—Mrs. Duncombe, Mrs. Fuller, as a matter of necessity, Mrs. Moy.’

‘Oh!’

‘Needful, my dear, to propitiate that set. Also that mayoress, Mrs. Truelove, isn’t she? Six. We’ll fill up with country people.’

Six more distinguished names were soon supplied, of ladies who would give their patronage, provided neither toil nor care was required of them; and still consulting, the two friends took their seats in the carriage. The time of the bazaar was to be fixed by the opening of the town-hall, which was to take place on the 12th of September—a Thursday, the week before the races; and the most propitious days appeared to be the Tuesday and Wednesday before the Great Backsworth Cup Day, since the world would then be in an excited, pleasure-seeking state, favourable to their designs.

‘I shall have a party in the house,’ said Lady Tyrrell: ‘shall you be able?’

‘I can’t tell; you know it does not depend on me, and I certainly shall not ask it as a favour. Camilla, did I tell you that I tried to make my father understand the state of things, and speak to Raymond; but he would only say, that while I am so young and inexperienced, it is a great advantage for me to live with Mrs. Poyndsett, and that I must be the greatest comfort to her. Papa is an intense believer in Mrs. Poyndsett, and when he once has taken up a notion nothing will convince him.’

‘You can’t even make capital of this purchase of a house of your own.’

‘I don’t like to do that.’

‘My dear, I see your delicacy and forbearance, and I would not urge you, if I did not see how deeply your happiness is concerned. Of course, I don’t mean merely the authority over the *wirthschaft*, though somehow the cares of it are an ingredient in female contentment; but forgive me, Cecil, I am certain that you will never take your right place—where you care for it more—till you have a home of your own.’

‘Ah!’ The responsive sound burst from the very depths of Cecil’s heart, penetrated as they had never been before; but pride and reserve

at once sprang up, and she answered, coldly, 'I have no reason to complain.'

'Right, my dear Cecil, I like you the better;' and she pressed her hand.

'It is quite true?' said Cecil, withdrawing hers.

'Quite, absolutely true. He would die rather than give you any reason for the slightest murmur; but Cecil, dearest, that very heedfulness shows there is something he cannot give you.'

'I don't know why you should say so,' answered a proud but choked voice.

'I say so,' replied the clear tones, firmly, though with a touch of pity, 'because I see it. Cecil, poor child, they married you very young!'

'I missed nothing,' exclaimed Cecil; but she felt that she could only say so in the past, and her eyes burnt with unshed tears.

'No, my dear, you were still a girl, and your deeper woman's heart had not grown to perceive that it was not met.'

'He chose me,' she faintly said.

'His mother needed a daughter. It was proper for him to marry, and you were the most eligible party. I will answer for it that he warned you how little he could give.'

'He did,' cried Cecil. 'He did tell me that he could not begin in freshness and warmth, like a young man; but I thought it only meant that we were too sensible to care about nonsense, and liked him for it. He always must have been staid and reserved—he never could have been different, Camilla. Don't smile in that way! Tell me what you mean.'

'My dear Cecil, I knew Raymond Poyndsett a good many years before you did.'

'And—Well? Then he had a first love?' said Cecil, in a voice schooled into quiet. 'Was he different then? Was he as desperate as poor Frank is now?'

'Frank is a very mild copy of him at that age. He overbore everyone, wrung consent from all, and did everything but overcome his mother's calm hostility and self-assertion.'

'Did that stop it? She died of course,' said Cecil. 'She could not have left off loving him.'

'She did not die, but her family were wearied out by the continual objections to their overtures, and the supercilious way of treating them. They thought it a struggle of influence, and that he was too entirely dominated for a daughter-in-law to be happy with her. So they broke it off.'

'And she—' Cecil looked up with searching eyes.

'She had acutely felt the offence, the weakness, the dutifulness, whatever you may choose to call it, and in the rebound she married.'

'Who is she?' gasped Cecil.

'It is not fair to tell you,' was the gentle answer with a shade of rebuke. 'You need not look for her. She is not in the county.'

‘I hope I shall never see her!’

‘You need not dread doing so if you can only have fair play, and establish the power that belongs rightly to you. She would have no chance with you, even if he had ever forgiven her.’

‘Has not he?’

‘Never!’

‘And he used up all his heart?’ said Cecil, in a low, musing tone.

‘All but what his mother absorbed. She was a comparatively young and brilliant woman, and she knew her power. It is a great ascendancy, and only a man’s honest blindness could suppose that any woman would be content under it.’

Cecil’s tongue refused to utter what oppressed her heart—those evenings beside the sofa, those eager home expeditions for Sunday, the uniform maintenance of his mother’s supremacy.

‘And you think absence from her would lessen her influence?’

‘I am sure of it. There might be a struggle, but if I know Mr. Charnock Poyntsett rightly, he is too upright not to be conscious of what is due to you, and be grieved not to be able to give you more—that is, when his mother is not holding him in her grasp. Nor can there be any valid objection, since Mrs. Miles Charnock is always at her service.’

‘She will return to Africa. I don’t know why she and Rosamond have been always so much more acceptable.’

‘They are not her rivals; besides, they have not your strength. She is a woman who tries to break whatever she cannot bend, and the instant her son began to slip from her grasp the contest necessarily began. You had much better have it over once and for ever, and have him on your side. Insist on a house of your own, and when you have made your husband happy in it, then, then—Ah! Good morning—Sir George!’

She had meant to say, ‘then you win his heart,’ but the words would not come, and a loathing hatred of the cold-hearted child who had a property in Raymond so mastered her that she welcomed the interruption, and did not return to the subject.

She knew when she had said enough, and feared to betray herself; nor could Cecil bear to resume the talk, stunned and sore as she was at the revelation, though with no suspicion that the speaker had been the object of her husband’s affection. She thought it must have been the other sister, now in India, and that this gave the key to many allusions she had heard, and which she marvelled at herself for not having understood. The equivocation had entirely deceived her, and she little thought she had been taking counsel with the rival who was secretly triumphing in Raymond’s involuntary constancy, and sowing seeds of vengeance against an ancient enemy.

She could not settle to anything when she came home. Life had taken a new aspect. Hitherto she had viewed herself as born to all attention and deference, and had taken it as a right, and now she found herself the victim of a *mariage de convenance* to a man of exhausted affections, who

meant her only to be the attendant of his domineering mother. The love that was dawning in her heart did but add poignancy to the bitterness of the revelation, and fervour to her resolve to win the mastery over the heart which was her lawful possession.

She was restless till his return. She was going to an evening party, and though usually passive as to dress, she was so changeable and difficult to satisfy, that Grindstone grew cross, and showed it by stern, rigid obedience. And Cecil well knew that Grindstone, who was in authority in the present house, hated the return to be merely the visitor of Alston and Jenkins.

In the drawing-room, Cecil fluttered from book to window, window to piano again, throwing down her occupation at every sound and taking up another; and when at last Raymond came in, his presence at first made her musings seem mere fancies.

Indeed, it would have been hard to define what was wanting in his manner. He lamented his unavoidable delay, and entertained her with all the political and parliamentary gossip he had brought home, and which she always much enjoyed as a tribute to her wisdom, so much that it had been an entire, though insensible cure, for the Rights of Woman. Moreover, he was going with her to this 'drum,' though he would greatly have preferred the debate, and was to be summoned in case of a division. She knew enough of the world to be aware that such an attentive and courteous husband was not the rule. But what was courtesy to one who longed for unity?

'Is Frank to be there this evening?' he asked.

'Yes, I believe so.'

'I thought he was to have gone with us.'

'He told me not to depend on him. He had made an engagement to ride into the country with Sir Harry Vivian.' And she added, though the proud spirit so hated what seemed to her like making an advance that it sounded like a complaint, 'So you can't avoid going with me!'

'I should any way have gone with you, but I may have to leave you to Frank to see you away,' he said. 'And I had rather have Frank here than with that set.'

'Breaking up one of our few *tête-à-tête* evenings, and they are becoming few enough!'

This murmur gratified him, and he said, 'We shall be more alone together now. The Rectory is almost ready, and Julius means to move in another week, and I suppose Miles will carry Anne off before the year is over.'

'Yes, we are the only ones with no home.'

'Rather we hold fast to the old home.'

'Not my old home.'

'Does not mine become yours?'

'Not while—.' She paused and started afresh. 'Raymond, could we not live at Swanslea, if it is bought for us.'

‘Swanslea! Five miles off! Impossible.’

Cecil was silent.

‘My dear Cecil,’ he said, after a few moments’ consideration, ‘I can understand that you felt unfortunately crowded last year, but all that is over, and you must see that we are necessary to my mother, and that all my duties require me to live at home.’

‘You could attend to the property from Swanslea.’

‘The property indeed! I meant my mother!’

‘She has Anne.’

‘Anne will soon be in Africa—even if she were more of a companion. I am sorry it is a trial to you; for my proper place is clearly with my mother, the more in her helpless state, and with my brothers gone out into the world. Now that the numbers are smaller, you will find it much easier to take the part that I most earnestly wish should be yours.’

‘I cannot get on with her.’

‘Do not say so! Do not think so! To have Rosamond there with her Irish ease, and her reserve, kept you in the background before; I saw it, but I could not help it; and now there will be no hindrance to your drawing together. There is nothing I so desire.’

If the carriage had not stopped as he spoke, Cecil would not have uttered the thought that smote her, namely, that his desire was on behalf not of his wife, but of his mother, to whom he was ready to sacrifice her happiness without a pang. She did not see that he could imagine no greater happiness for her than a thorough love of his mother.

They certainly were not the happiest couple present as they walked up stairs, looking like a model husband and wife, with their name echoing from landing to landing.

If any expression savouring of slang could possibly be applied to Raymond, he might be said to be struck all of a heap by his wife’s proposition. He had never even thought of the possibility of making a home anywhere but at Compton Poynsett, or of his wife wishing that he should do so; and proverbial sayings about the incompatibility of relatives-in-law suddenly assumed a reasonableness that he could not bear to remember.

But his courtesy and sense of protection, trained by a woman of the old school, would not suffer him to relax his attention to his wife. Though he was very anxious to get back to the house, he would not quit her neighbourhood till he had found Frank and entrusted her to him.

He was not happy about Frank. The youth was naturally of an intellectual and poetical temperament, and had only cared for horses and field-sports as any healthy lad, growing up in a country house must enjoy them; and Raymond had seen him introduced to the style of men whom he thought would be thoroughly congenial to him, and not unlikely to lead him on to make a mark in the world.

But that unfortunate Vivian attachment stood in the way; Sir Harry and his elder daughter ignored it entirely, but did not forbid Frank the

house; though Lady Tyrrell took care, as only she could do, that Eleonora should never have ten minutes' private conversation with him, either at home or abroad. Even in a crowd, a ball, or garden party, the vigilant sister had her means of breaking into any kind of confidence; and Frank was continually tantalized by the pursuit. It could not but unsettle him, and draw him into much more gaiety than was compatible with the higher pursuits his mother had expected of him; and what was worse, it threw him into Sir Harry Vivian's set, veteran *roués*, and younger men who looked up to their knowingness, and listened to their good stories.

What amount of harm it was doing, Raymond could not guess. He had known it all himself, and had escaped unscathed, but he did not fear the less for his younger brother, and he only hoped that the inducement to mingle with such society would be at an end before Frank had formed a taste for the habits that there prevailed.

Eleonora Vivian had been much admired at first, but her cold manner kept everyone at a distance, and her reserve was hardly ever seen to relax. However, her one friendship with the Strangeways family gave Raymond hopes that her constancy was not proof against the flattering affection, backed by wealth, that seemed to await her there. The best he could wish for Frank was that the infatuation might be over as soon as possible, though he pitied the poor fellow sincerely when he saw him, as he did to-night, waiting with scarcely concealed anxiety, while Miss Vivian stood listening to a long discourse about yachting from an eager pair of chattering girls.

Then some break occurred, and Frank moved up to her. 'Your last evening! How little I have seen of you.'

'Little indeed.'

'I called, but you were at the Strangeways.'

'They are very kind to me. When is your holiday?'

'Not till spring, but I may get a few days in the autumn: you will be at home?'

'As far as I know.'

'If I thought for a moment you cared to see me; but you have shown few signs of wishing it of late.'

'Frank—if I could make you understand—'

They were walking towards a recess, when Lady Vivian fastened upon Raymond. 'Pray find my sister; she forgets that we have to be at Lady Granby's—Oh! are you there, Lenore? Will you see her down, Mr. Poyntsett? Well, Frank, did you get as far as you intended?'

And she went down on his arm, her last words being, 'Take care of yourself till we meet at home. For this one year I call Sirenwood home—Then!'

Raymond and Lenore said no more to one another. The ladies were put into the carriage. The elder brother bade Frank take care of Cecil, and started for Westminster with the poor lad's blank and disappointed face still before his eyes, hoping at least it was well for him, but little in love with life, or what it had to offer.

(To be continued.)

DISOBEDIENT CECIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'MRS. JERNINGHAM'S JOURNAL.'

CHAPTER XIV.

Yes, the carriage had actually been overturned ; and if Mrs. Wyndham, who said she had been so often thrown from her horse, had also experienced what it was to be upset in a carriage, to Cecil and Helen at least so disagreeable an adventure was a novelty.

Juliet and Helen both screamed loudly, but Cecil did not utter a sound. She had a great objection to screaming, and perhaps had never been guilty of the act in her life ; and she had also a strong desire, and always had felt this desire, to behave well if by an unlucky—or lucky chance—which shall we say ? for at sixteen almost any vivid excitement, almost any interruption to the calm monotony of every-day life is welcome—she had a strong desire then to behave well if by *any* chance she found herself in real danger, and that she was in real danger now the stoutest heart could not have denied.

She had always believed that there was nothing hardly that Jocelyn—the beloved ideal brother—would value or admire so much in a woman as courage of all kinds, moral and physical, but especially moral, so to possess moral courage had from a very small child been her ambition. Her character was not like Helen's, a timid one, and she had always hoped and believed that she had bravery enough to satisfy both herself and Jocelyn ; but hope and belief are different things from certainty ; only trial, and trial successfully met, could bring certainty, and in the life of a carefully brought up and thoroughly watched young maiden of the nineteenth century things seldom occur that can be fairly called dangerous, or be a *bonâ fide* test of courage. Cecil's life had been as free from such things as the lives of other girls, and though she was quite aware that Helen was easily frightened and that she was not, she had never felt sure how either the one or the other would behave if there was anything to be really frightened at.

'Oh-h-h !' cried Juliet.

'Ah-h-h !' screamed Helen.

But Cecil retained her composure, and even in that first moment was conscious of a glow of satisfaction at finding that she did so.

'Are you hurt ? Keep still—don't struggle,' she said, calmly. 'Whatever has happened it is over now—we are not moving.'

'We shall be killed,' cried Helen.

'Ought we not to try to get out of the upper window ?' continued Cecil : 'perhaps we could get the door open. Let me see.'

'Oh, if we are killed while we are doing wrong !' moaned Helen.

'I don't know where my arms and legs are, or *which* are mine and which are somebody else's,' wailed Juliet.

‘But we are *not* killed,’ answered Cecil : ‘and oh, Juliet, don’t make me laugh—it is painful laughing in such a heap.’

‘Oh, don’t laugh—don’t *speak* of laughing, Cecil,’ cried Helen ; ‘it is actually wicked.’ Then she gave another scream.

‘What is it—are you really hurt?’ said Cecil. ‘I do hope we are none of us hurt.’

‘It was my elbow went through the glass under it—I am *lying* on glass,’ cried Helen. ‘Oh, how dreadful it is—what *shall* we do?’

‘Do nothing,’ said Cecil ; ‘keep perfectly still till we tell you to move. No one shall hurt you. Juliet, I think I had better try to climb up and get the door open. I am quite sure I can do it—and the window is not large enough for us to get out of it.’

‘What can the men be about?’ said Juliet : ‘lucky fellows who have plenty of room, not heaped up as we are.’

‘Perhaps they are both of them killed,’ said Helen, very solemnly.

‘This *is* my hand,’ said Juliet joyfully ; ‘I know it by the split glove, and I do believe that it is in its proper place too ! and *not* where my foot ought to be.’

But Cecil had been too sanguine when she said that whatever could happen had happened and was over, for just then there was a considerable movement of the carriage, a shaking and even jolting, which threw its unlucky occupants still more closely together, and at which Helen screamed again, but Juliet had recovered her presence of mind by that time and emulated Cecil’s courage. Though with her there seemed a dash of bravura in it, as she made game of the matter while Cecil was calm and composed ; still, it might not have been bravura in Mrs. Wyndham, but merely the outlet which in her character was natural under the circumstances. There is nothing in which we are more apt to misjudge others than in supposing that what they say or do is forced or affected because it is, besides being, not what we should say or do ourselves in the same position, what we cannot understand anyone saying or doing. The only conclusion we ought to draw is, that we *cannot* understand it. Neither is it always evidence of a want of feeling or of a frivolous character to jest where we ourselves are grave. A joke is to some natures impossible, while to others it is inevitable, yet the latter nature may in its own way have as much depth as the former. Nay, there is no reason why its real depth and force may not be greater than that of the nature which has a graver surface or that is even graver throughout.

John the footman’s face appeared shutting out the moonlight from the open window.

‘O ma’am,’ he said, ‘are you hurt any of you? I be shaking all over—David’s holding the hoss that isn’t killed. O whatever will the Colonel say? Diomed was the best hoss in the stable.’

‘Open the door, John, and let us try to get out,’ said Juliet.

John obeyed, and then with considerable difficulty succeeded in extricating first Cecil and then Juliet from the carriage.

‘Something holds me,’ said Helen, faintly. ‘Oh, what can it be?—it is a judgment!’

‘It is your sleeve which is shut in the door,’ cried Cecil, and taking scissors from her pocket she gave them down to poor Helen, who with considerable difficulty contrived to use her disengaged arm to extricate the other by cutting the sleeve of her jacket to pieces; but as she did so her wail rose up out of the open door.

‘What will papa say?’

‘Nothing, I hope,’ cried Cecil; and then she, Juliet, and John joined together to help poor Helen forth from the cage she was confined in, for she was too much shaken and terrified to be able to assist herself.

As soon as she found her feet on the earth again she burst out crying. Cecil tried to console her, but Juliet said ruefully:

‘O Helen, you need not cry; *you* have not got a dead Diomed and a Colonel.’

‘Is the horse really dead?’ cried Cecil; and she and Juliet went to where the coachman was bending over the unfortunate animal.

Helen remained where she was, still crying, for she was afraid of horses.

John hastily unharnessed the one that was not injured, and held him steady. Poor Diomed lay on his side, not struggling, but panting, with glazed eyes.

‘Oh, he is alive!’ cried Juliet.

‘Yes, ma’am, he is alive; he’s a deal of pluck, and will hold on more than most of them,’ said David; ‘but I’m afeerd for all that;’ and he shook his head.

Juliet went up to the poor steed that lay panting on the ground, and looking of a most wonderful blackness in the white moonlight. She knelt down by its side, and patted its neck and handsome mane with light caressing fingers.

‘O you good, noble creature!’ she cried, her lovely eyes full of tears; ‘don’t die; you have always done your duty; you are such a worthy useful thing, and your master likes and values you so very much.’

She rose to her feet, and caught hold of Cecil’s hands. ‘It is so shocking to have killed a horse!’ she cried.

‘Oh, Juliet, we did not kill it,’ said Cecil, quite distressed; ‘horses will fall.’

‘Why did you drive so fast, David?’ said his mistress reproachfully to the coachman. ‘You ought not to have done so merely because I told you. You are bound to take care of the horses. You ought not to have done it.’

‘No, ma’am, I didn’t ought to,’ replied the man humbly; ‘and I’m afeerd the Colonel will turn me off, I am; and I sha’n’t get such another master in a hurry.’

‘Oh, no, no!’ cried Juliet; ‘he sha’n’t turn you off, indeed he sha’n’t. I will take all the blame on myself.’

‘What shall we do now?’ asked Cecil.

‘I sha’n’t stir from the beast, ma’am,’ said David; ‘I must just keep him up as well as I can, and I’m sure if I can do nothing, it will be a comfort like to the creature to see me here. It would be uncommon lonely for a hoss to die in the middle of the road at night by hisself.’

‘Oh, don’t talk of dying!’ cried Helen from her distance, with a shudder. She had heard every word that David said, and every word seemed to implant a dagger in her heart. But she spoke in too low a voice for her speech to reach the others, all collected in an eager interested group round poor Diomed.

It is a frightful thing to see a horse fall, and then lie on the ground in its harness, with the heavy carriage behind it, even when it is unhurt and a stranger to you; frightful in its struggles, and appalling if it struggles not. And if the horse is hurt, and is one that you care for, or your friend cares for, the sight is as piteous as it is frightful. Diomed was at this moment by far the most interesting personage in the little society so curiously assembled on the high road, for the five human beings were uninjured, and he was the only sufferer.

‘John had better mount Ludovic, and ride back and tell the Colonel,’ said Juliet. ‘He will be wondering what has detained us. He will get frightened, and go knocking at your door, Cecil, to find if I am there.’

‘Oh, if my uncle and aunt have only not come home! Oh, if they, too, could have met with an accident!’ cried Cecil, with the utmost sincerity, unconscious at the moment of the inhuman nature of her wish.

Juliet burst out laughing.

‘Don’t, Cecil,’ she said; ‘if you make me laugh I can’t answer for the consequences. I am so miserable about Diomed, and so frightened lest my Colonel should be angry, and if I begin laughing, I really believe I shall die.’

‘You had much better cry,’ said Helen, wiping her eyes; ‘it always does one good.’

‘What will you do, ma’am?’ said John, respectfully. He did not mean to ask her whether she would laugh or cry, though it sounded as if he did.

‘I will walk back with the Miss Vauxes as far as Fernley, and if you overtake your master he will come to me, I am sure. I shall probably meet him by the time he reaches Fernley. I daresay he will send you on to the house to get help for David, and then he himself can take care of me.’

John scrambled up on to Ludovic’s back, and trotted off down the hill.

The three girls looked at each other.

‘Are we really none of us hurt?’ asked Juliet. ‘How lucky we are; but I’m not sure it is luck. If I was a *little* hurt, my Colonel could not be angry with me.’

‘Will he be very angry?’ asked Cecil, in rather an awe-struck voice.

‘I am extremely afraid he will,’ was the answer; ‘he is so very particular about ladies and horses. Really nice men, I believe, always are.’

'Had we not better make haste home?' suggested Helen. 'You see there is still a hope papa will not have returned; and if he is there, and we walk up to the house with you, dear Mrs. Wyndham, at this hour of the night, I really don't know what he would do or say.'

'I hope he would say, "My dear Mrs. Wyndham, how glad I am to make your acquaintance; do come in and have some champagne,"' said Juliet.

'I am sure he won't then,' replied Helen, shaking her head sorrowfully.

Meantime they were walking briskly along the road towards Fernley Manor.

'It would still be awfully jolly for us, if it was not for Diomed and my Colonel,' said Juliet.

'And if it was not for papa,' put in Helen.

'It really is an adventure,' said Cecil; 'and adventures come so seldom that it is quite a pity it is not pleasant.'

'If we all of us catch cold,' cried Juliet; 'and Cecil and I are done up with heavy colds in our heads for the ball, and have to wear flannel bed-gowns for ball-dresses, and eat gruel between the waltzes instead of ice!'

'There are worse things may happen than that,' said Helen, like a miserable oracle.

'Worse!' cried Juliet; 'what earthly horror can be worse than a cold in the head at a ball? Why it is *unbecoming*, Helen! Have you reflected that it is unbecoming?'

The sounds of John's horse's feet had quite died away in the distance, and the girls had turned a corner of the road, which rendered the carriage with David and Diomed invisible. It was a strange experience for them to be out alone together on that moonlight winter night.

To Juliet and Cecil there was something attractive in the novelty and unconventionality of their position, and the extreme beauty of the earth, clad in that cold garb of winter moonlight, sent little thrills of pleasure at least to Cecil's heart. To be out at such an hour in such a scene, and with Juliet, were pleasures the enjoyment of which had never crossed her mind as possible in her most impossible and most fascinating dreams; and she found herself hardly able to regret the accident, even with all its only too probable future results, which had been the occasion of so much present happiness; for at the moment that they found themselves alone on the road, out of sight and hearing of all the rest of the world, she did experience actual happiness. Of course she was exceedingly sorry for, and had been at first quite shocked at the sight of, the fallen horse, but then she quickly consoled herself with the idea that the horse would certainly recover.

Helen, on the contrary, was both frightened and miserable. She felt guilty, and as if she was being punished for her guilt; and even without that sensation of wrong-doing—even had the accident occurred in the most orthodox and correct manner, she would have been dreadfully frightened. The romance of the incident had not the same fascination

for her that it had for Cecil, nor were her feelings for Juliet of that overpowering nature which made the being with her intense happiness. The lovely light shed by her presence was not for Helen, and did not change all surrounding circumstances in her eyes. She greatly liked Mrs. Wyndham, and thought her charming, and anything that gave Cecil such exquisite joy as a meeting with Juliet did, delighted Helen. But for her own part, she would far rather have visited Mrs. Wyndham under the wing of her Aunt Flora, than have had stolen meetings, and moonlight drives equally stolen; and if at this moment she had a wish in the world, it was that she might suddenly find she was dreaming, and awake, in her own little bed at home, with the pleasant consciousness on her mind that she had returned to Fernley Manor in the Byfield fly after the Penny Reading: that there had been no moonlight drive, no upset, no danger; no walk home of three girls alone together, and no horrible prospect of discovery, or of what the next day might bring forth.

She felt quite a shock when Juliet began to talk lightly. 'I remember once being lost when I was a child,' she said. 'I can't think why this makes it come back to me so vividly; it was awful fun; I *did* like it. I think it must be the look of the grass in the moonlight, for I had never thought much about moonlight before, or seen much of it either, I suppose. They do put poor little scraps of children to bed in the cruellest way on lovely moonlight nights, don't they? and that was perhaps the first time that I had ever seen enough of moonlight on the grass to feel acquainted with it, and so I think of it now.'

'And you were lost at night, and were not frightened?' said Helen.

'Oh, no, I was not a bit frightened,' said Juliet; 'why should I be? Nobody had ever hurt me, and why should they begin then? I had the most perfect confidence in all the world, animate and inanimate. I was not lost at night, and I did not lose myself on purpose; but when I found I was lost, I was delighted, and I kept running away and hiding, I was so afraid that I might be found; and I succeeded, you see, for night came, and there I was, such a helpless child, and still lost!'

'But it is so wonderful that you were not frightened,' persisted Helen.

'I thought it delightful to be alone,' laughed Juliet. 'I suppose I had never been alone before, or not much, not often—children seldom are, you know. Don't you sometimes wonder that people make such slaves and wretches of children, never consulting them about anything, catching them up and putting them down, and making rules for all they do? Take that carrying them off early to bed on summer evenings, when they are wide awake and in the highest spirits; take that, alone—why, it is the cruellest tyranny imaginable.'

'It is all of a piece with the way girls are treated afterwards, as I often tell Helen,' said Cecil.

'Yes,' cried Helen; 'but that is different from this. I am very much interested about her being lost; do, please, tell me the rest.'

‘Well, I believe, as I said, the being alone—all alone—was half the charm of it. I have been told that when the Queen came to the throne the first thing she did was to turn everybody out of the room, and then, for the first time in her life, she was alone for a few minutes.’

‘Yes,’ replied Helen doubtfully, ‘I have heard *that*; but then they do say that she did not like it at all, and that almost directly she came running out of her room, and calling everybody to her.’

‘The poor Queen!’ said Juliet. ‘However, if true, I don’t wonder, for that was the force of habit. She had never been left a minute alone, and she was eighteen years old. Just fancy! Now I was only eight, if I was so much, which I wasn’t; I was only five or six, so I had not the habit of a life to overcome in a minute.’

‘I like being alone,’ said Cecil.

‘O Cecil!’ cried Helen, quite reproachfully, ‘how often I must be in the way then!’

‘Nonsense; not a bit!’ replied Cecil, laughing. ‘I am often alone, and always at night, and when I am in my own room, and sometimes out in the garden. I don’t say I want to be a bit more alone than I am, or that I might not get tired of it if I was, but only that when I am, I like it.’

‘I am glad that is all,’ answered Helen, quite relieved by the explanation. ‘And now, Juliet, do finish your story.’

‘What a child she is for stories!’ cried Juliet, nodding across at Cecil. ‘Well, there is not so much to tell, only that I kept hiding and running away, and running away and hiding, just for fear I might be found, till at last I really was a good long way from home, and had run across fields and through little woods to the nearest town, and when I found myself in the streets I began to know that I was tired and hungry; and moonlight in a street is not so pretty, by any means, as it is on grass; so altogether I looked about me, not feeling quite so well satisfied with being lost as I had been at first.’

‘And what did you do?’

‘I sat down on the steps leading to the door of one of the houses and went fast asleep, which, all things considered, I believed showed great discretion and judgment on my part, and was altogether by far the most sensible thing I could do under the circumstances.’

‘And then?’

‘Oh, then,’ said Juliet, laughing, ‘I waked—how well I recollect it! I declare I recollect it as well as if it had only happened yesterday—by somebody treading on me.’

‘Treading on you! O you poor little thing,’ said Cecil.

‘I am sure you were frightened then, and began to cry?’ asked Helen.

‘Frightened, and began to cry! No, indeed,’ retorted Juliet; ‘I pushed the great big foot away, and said—crossly enough I make no doubt—Don’t.’

‘Why who are you?’ said an astonished voice, up ever so high in the

air above the big foot and where I sat ; ' a little girl ! O little girl, you must not sit here in the night, you know ; you must not, indeed.'

' Yes I must,' I replied, quite contentedly ; ' I'm lost.'

' Lost !' said the astonished voice ; and from the astonishment in it you would have thought it had not been a bit astonished the first time it spoke. Then the owner of the voice, a tall gentleman dressed in black, caught me up in his arms, and carried me back into the house, which I found he had just left. He brought me into a sitting-room, brilliantly lighted, and with several people in it, and put me down among them.'

' And what did you do ?'

' There was a table with tea and cakes on it, so I made a dart at the cakes. I was so hungry ; but I had always been taught nice manners and to be well behaved, so when I had helped myself I made a low curtsy, and said " Yes, please—thank you," and then began munching the cakes without another word, making believe that I had been offered them, you know.'

' And after that I suppose they found out who you were, and returned you to your family ?'

' They were very good-natured people, and they made a great deal of me. I had to be kept there all night ; but a servant was sent to relieve the anxiety at home, when they had puzzled out by my descriptions who I was ; for I knew nothing about names, except that mine was Julie, and that I was Mamma's little girl.'

' And so you were really lost, and really liked it ?' said Helen. ' How odd, for being lost was one of the terrors that haunted my childhood. I used to have such a fear that I might be lost some day.'

' Well, you can't be lost now,' said Cecil ; ' three people together could hardly be lost, I suppose.'

' But there is actually nobody in sight or hearing but our three selves,' cried Juliet. ' We are really and truly unprotected females ; if such animals have never yet existed since the world began, they are beginning to exist now. O Cecil, O Helen, if we cannot be lost, what will happen next ? Ghosts ? Robbers ? Choose, choose quickly—which shall it be ?'

' Oh, not ghosts,' cried Cecil.

' Not robbers, please,' urged Helen, looking over her shoulder in genuine alarm.

' But you refuse everything,' said Juliet ; ' I gave you a fair choice, and you won't make it. Now I do wonder what the ghost of a horse would be like, for if Diomed dies—poor, *poor* Diomed !—I am sure his ghost will haunt me. Do you suppose the ghosts of all horses must be white, or pale grey, like other ghosts ? and if so, how is one to know it is the ghost of a black or brown horse ? Now poor Diomed is perfectly black, without a white hair anywhere, except the star on his forehead. Oh, what will my Colonel say ?—and besides his being a favourite horse, I know he is worth more than a hundred guineas ; but it would be such nonsense to have a white horse appear as *his* ghost, you know ; and yet I can't

imagine a real ghost being anything but white or very pale grey, can you ?'

Cecil laughed, and Helen replied, 'It is well to be you, Mrs. Wyndham ; you find amusement in everything, and nothing daunts you. Now I am so frightened about papa's finding us out, that I can hardly attend to anything else.'

'But why should he be angry? I don't quite understand. Surely it is natural enough I should offer to take you home, and Mrs. Lester, who had the charge of you, let you come with me.'

Helen blushed crimson.

'That is true, though,' said Cecil ; 'it does make a difference. I really don't see, Helen, why he should be angry—that did not strike me before.'

'Mrs. Lester, I am sure, thought we all knew each other, in a regular way,' said Helen, speaking with some hesitation, and in a low voice ; 'we seemed so intimate, you know, that she could not imagine——'

Here she came to a full stop, and Juliet broke in on what she was saying with the sweetest imaginable peal of laughter—

'That I was tabooed !' she cried. 'Now, honour bright, my dear girls, have you the least idea *why* I am tabooed ?'

'Only because Uncle James cannot bear nice people—he never can. I am sure it is because he is not nice himself,' cried Cecil eagerly, and with perfect sincerity.

'Oh, hush ! please don't, dear Cecil,' pleaded Helen. 'But it is quite true that he does not like nice people, Mrs. Wyndham, and that there is no other possible reason for his not liking you.'

'Everybody does like me,' said Juliet ; 'I know that, and take it as a matter of course. And so we will agree that when I am disliked, it is for the same reason as when I am liked, just because I am nice !'

'Now here we are at the gate,' said Cecil, 'and it is open, so I don't think they have come home. Robert would have shut it, I am almost sure.'

'I suppose I had better leave you here, and walk on. My Colonel must be coming ; I almost wonder he is not here already.'

'We could not possibly leave you alone,' said Cecil ; 'suppose John missed him in any way, and you had to walk home by yourself.'

'It would not be more than your walk to inquire after me, you dear Cecil,' replied Juliet, smiling kindly at her ; 'so why should not I do on my own account what you did on mine ?'

'Only that was morning, and this is real night. Besides which, don't you see how low the moon is getting ; this beautiful silver brightness will soon have disappeared, and the night will be quite, quite dark. O Juliet, you would be lost, you must not go.'

'You are as much afraid of the dark as Tiny. Do you think I should meet Doctor Bubble between this and home ? I am not a bit frightened. I think I will go.'

Juliet stood hesitating at the open gate, looking lovely in the moonlight, while she glanced smiling but doubtful about her.

‘But I have another reason,’ said Cecil, eagerly; ‘Colonel Wyndham thought it quite wrong of me, even in the morning. He would be shocked at your doing it now.’

‘Oh,’ said Juliet lightly, ‘but that was because you did it with *malice prepense*. This is an accident; besides which you are a young lady in your uncle’s house. The schoolroom is your proper place, and the governess your fitting companion, and I am a great big dignified matronly trustworthy married woman.’

And Juliet spread out her arms like wings as she spoke, and laughed with the utmost gaiety.

‘And then,’ she continued, ‘what am I to do if I don’t travel on and on till I reach my husband or my home? Am I to stand out here and shut the gates when the revered uncle has driven through? No, I know. How delicious! What fun! Take me in, and up into your own sanctums, and let me see how you live and where you live, and all about it; and then when my Colonel does not meet me he will be sure to come and see if I am here, and if the revered uncle does return, why I have asked for shelter because I have met with an accident—why not?’

She spoke rapidly, and danced a little when she had finished speaking.

‘Would not that be nice?’ she said, ‘and really it is very cold out here. Don’t you find your teeth chattering and your feet like lumps of ice that *won’t* get warm enough to melt? I am quite sure you do. Come, take courage, bring me up into your bedroom and warm me by your fire. I want warming. I do indeed.’

‘It would be very, *very* nice,’ cried Cecil, ‘and I should like nothing better, and really it seems as if it was the only thing *left* to be done.’

‘Out of all things in the world, we must be coming very near the end of time, then,’ said Juliet.

‘It is not excessively late even yet,’ said Helen, ‘and evidently they have not come home from the party, and Colonel Wyndham cannot be much longer. He will probably fetch you before they do.’

‘I see the scales are deciding in my favour,’ cried Juliet, ‘and I am not to be left out in the cold like a waif or a stray, but to be taken cosily in to the fireside, to see once more the interior of a human habitation, and once more warm my feet on a human fender. I am *so* glad.’

By this time they had all three passed through the open gates and begun their ascent of the rather steep hill which wound up to the portico of Fernley Manor. The moon was getting lower and lower, trees grew and spread their branches on each side of the road, and clouds had latterly risen, and floated about the sky; and now one crossing the path of the moon concealed her almost entirely from sight, and left the girls in something very nearly approaching to darkness.

‘You would not have liked that out on the road by yourself,’ cried Helen, catching hold of Mrs. Wyndham and of Cecil as she spoke with both her hands. ‘Oh, I feel frightened. I do wish we

were at home. I wish I was in bed. I feel cold and ill. Will it never be over? Why did not we come home in the Byfield fly !'

The cloud passed away, and the white moonlight flickered through the black trees, and, falling on the figures beneath them, showed Helen pale and trembling, and clutching with frightened hands at her companions.

Juliet patted the hand which had seized on her with airy tenderness. 'Poor little thing,' she said, 'it has been altogether too much for her. She is ill, or she will be ill, I am sure.'

'I hope not,' cried Cecil. 'Dear Helen, do try not to mind, we shall be home so very soon now ; it is such a little way to the house ; and then we will get you warm and put you to bed directly, and you will sleep soundly, and to-morrow you will not mind anything about it.'

'Yes, dear,' said Helen, with a faint, sickly smile.

'And as to the Byfield fly,' said Juliet, 'the only person to blame about it was Mrs. Lester. She had been entrusted with the charge of you two most valuable young females. It had been arranged that you should return from the meeting in the Byfield fly, and, after that, she actually had the—what shall we call it?—the audacity, the untrustworthiness to send you off with a strange woman—that's me—in a carriage with a pair of dashing steeds like Diomed (ah, poor Diomed) and Ludovic. The consequences of the act must lie on her shoulders and burthen her conscience for the rest of her days. In fact, I think it is she, and she only, who is to be blamed about poor Diomed, for if she had not allowed you to come to me, I never should have dreamed of that driving frolic, but should have jogged home in domestic inglorious safety with my Colonel.'

'I don't *think* Mrs. Lester was to blame though,' said Helen, her sincerity and slight matter-of-factness obliging her to speak in defence of the absent when unjustly accused.

'What does it matter who was to blame now it is over and no harm done, at least as far as we are concerned? I don't see why anyone need ever know anything about it at all.'

'Ah, if that were possible,' sighed Helen.

'Why, just see how fortunately everything is happening. Uncle James might not have been dining out at all to-night, or he might have come home, and then it really would have been a very bad business ; and now it is as if it had all been arranged on purpose for us.'

'It really is a great encouragement to you, my dear children,' said Juliet, with pretty solemnity, 'to do the same kind of thing again. Yea, and over and over again. I hope we shall have heaps more of moonlight drives together.'

'I am sure I hope so too,' laughed Cecil.

'Oh, it is such a comfort this one is over,' said Helen, with a sigh of relief from the bottom of her heart, as they found themselves on the gravel in front of the house, and ran nimbly up the steps to the hall-door.

Cecil rang the bell. 'Robert is out with the carriage,' she said. 'Our

maid Eliza will be sitting up for us and will open the door, so it will be a little longer we shall have to wait, as it is further from her room than from the kitchen, where Robert would be. Oh, won't a warm fire and bed be comfortable! Here she comes; she has been very quick about it.'

As she spoke the last words, the bolt and chain from within were withdrawn, the door was thrown open, and, not Eliza, but Mr. Vaux stood before them.

(To be continued.)

A WINTER STORY.

VII.

But who is this by the half-open'd door,
Whose figure casts a shadow on the floor?

Matthew Arnold.

ONE bleak afternoon in December, Mrs. Cæsar, crossing the yard from the house with a great basket of clothes in her arms, was startled by meeting two figures, a lady and a gentleman, who had just turned in at the gate. Wonder dazzling her eyes for a moment, she did not recognize their faces until they were close to her, and she then, in her dismay, dropped the basket and faced them trembling.

'Have you forgotten me, Rachel?' said the lady, in a full sweet voice, that was yet unsteady with some emotion.

'No, Miss Hester,' said Rachel quickly, beginning to gather up the clothes with a sharp jerky action. 'People don't forget so easy, more's the pity.'

There was something in her attitude, as she stood between them and the house door, which was antagonistic, even defiant. The lady, after pausing for a moment, said a little wonderingly, 'I thought you at least, Rachel, would have been glad to see me? And my brother-in-law wishes to become acquainted with his parishioners.'

It was Rachel's turn to pause now. She looked from one to the other, and said slowly, 'Then yer not married, Miss Hester?'

'No, no,' said Hester, her cheeks flushing. Something in her voice conveyed more than the bare words; it was as if the pain of many years betrayed itself in the denial. 'It is Miss Agnes who married Mr. Claughton—have you not seen the children?—Rachel,' she went on in a low and rapid voice, 'is Mr. Oldfield in the house?—will you tell him that we are here?'

'Master'll never see you, Miss Hester,' said Rachel, dropping her defiance, and shaking her head sadly. 'I think at times as things is worse than iver they was with him. I'm fit to break my heart to see him. It 'ud be a good thing if he'd only let ye in, but it ain't a bit o' use. An' I daren't ask him, that's more.'

'Daren't?' repeated Hester.

'It's true,' said Mrs. Cæsar, with nervous impatience. 'He's so changed. He were always quiet, but it's a diff'rent sort o' quietness, that goes

through a body like a sword. If he'd speak I should know a deal better how to manage. Don't stop now, Miss Hester. I wouldn't ha' let ye stop so long but that he's out on the common. Don't stop. Seeing him won't do no good.'

Even at that moment, full as it was of acute pain, Hester was struck with a little wonder. Knowing Rachel well, she knew that she was a woman in whom timidity had never shown itself, for her undaunted spirit had been almost a byword in the old days. And yet she evidently feared Philip Oldfield. But it is certain that the sturdiest characters will often be cowed by what they do not understand. It has to them an element of mysteriousness, separating it from their usual experiences, and disabling their usual weapons.

'I am not afraid,' said Hester, with a little uplifting of her head. 'I should like to wait until he comes back. Do you not think we had better do so, Austin?'

Mr. Claughton, who might have been ten years older than Hester, a man of two or three and forty, had until now waited silently outside the conversation, but being appealed to, he said at once, 'I see no reason against it. Your master knows that he has old friends at hand, I suppose?' he added, addressing Mrs. Cæsar.

'Yes, sir, he knows it,' said Rachel, still speaking anxiously. 'But he thinks Miss Hester is yer wife. They're such fools about here, an' there's so little comin' and goin' from the farm, that I've niver been able rightly to get an answer. An' it do seem as if he were so fearful of anythin' that touches what's past an' gone. I'm afraid to do what you want, an' that's the truth.'

Whether or not Hester had been hitherto trying to keep back any signs of emotion, it seemed as if it almost over-mastered her at this moment. She became very pale, and her lips tried in vain to frame an answer. Mr. Claughton, glancing at her, said quietly, 'I think we will go in. If Mr. Oldfield disapproves we can assure him that we are the only persons to blame.'

Rachel shook her head, but she said no more. She took up her basket of clothes again, and carried it before them into the house. At the door, for some reason not easy to probe, she turned and looked inquiringly into Hester's face. Then she pushed open the door of the kitchen.

That hour of the day was, perhaps, the most cheerless of any in the great kitchen. The sun, which had but just sunk, left no warm glow behind it; and even had this been otherwise, a buttress, which projected west of the window facing the garden, effectually blocked out the setting sun from sight, and added a gloom to the shadows that loved to deepen on the old oak. Rachel's preparations for supper, moreover, which a little later brought a small stir of cheerfulness into the kitchen, had not yet begun. The fire threw out no more brightness than a dull red gleam, and in the chill of a winter afternoon the air struck cold and depressing. Hester, as she came in, shivered.

‘Does he live here?’ she said in a low voice, which showed she had not yet recovered herself. Rachel turned sharply round as if the question displeased her.

‘Yes, he does,’ she said, setting her basket on a chair with a thump. ‘An’ I don’t know as iver he were better housed in th’ old days. It ain’t the livin’ nor yet the feedin’ as is doin’ him harm.’

Mr. Claughton looked on a little puzzled at this demonstration, for Rachel had spoken with great energy; but Hester understood in a moment the faithful jealousy lurking in the words.

‘Yes, you have done everything for him, Rachel,’ she said, sighing. ‘How happy you have been! When he cut himself off from—us all, it was our one comfort to think that he had you to care for him. Those years that he was abroad alone were almost unendurable. Eight years, Rachel, eight years since I have seen him! Eight years since that night.’

She had caught her hand, and was looking into her eyes with a piteous yearning, as if the hunger of all those years had over-mastered her at last. Mr. Claughton went quietly out of the room and into the garden, where in the distance the blue hills were fading into dusky grey, and stood there near at hand, and yet so that Hester might be alone with Rachel.

‘Eight years!’ repeated the latter slowly, as Hester stopped, choked with a rush of feeling. ‘Ay, an’ it’s been a lifetime to Mr. Philip.’

‘And do you think it has been shorter for me?’ said Hester, passionately. ‘Do you think these years have passed so quickly? Do you think that I have not felt every sorrow of his ache again in my own heart? Look at me—am I what you remember? Is it age, do you say? No, no, age does not write these sort of marks on faces it needs something sharper, harder, for that work. O Rachel, thank God that He has let you serve your master as you have done, but do not believe that the suffering has been all on his side.’

‘It was yer words helped to hurt him, though,’ said Rachel, but more softly.

‘My words!’ repeated Hester, with scarcely controlled agitation: ‘I cannot think he would be so cruel as to remember words spoken in the first shock of that agony. It is impossible; he was too kind, too gentle! If I said once that I could not bear to see him, did I not repent of it, oh, a thousand times, knowing how much more terrible his sorrow must have been than ours—how greatly he must have needed comfort? And then to fly from us, when we should all have been together.’

‘O Miss Hester, he is not like other men. It crushed him. I think it were only God’s mercy kept him from layin’ hands on hisself.’

Perhaps Hester’s vehemence had exhausted itself; she did not take her eyes from Rachel, but she did not answer, and stood in the centre of the kitchen with her hands clasped before her. Whether the sadness of her look, the dreariness of the reminiscences recalled, or anxiety as to Mr. Oldfield’s return oppressed Mrs. Caesar, it is certain that she showed

many symptoms of discomfort. She moved quickly about the room, opening and shutting drawers, and stirring the fire into a blaze which brought the carved head into its grim life, and set it mopping and mowing in ghostly fashion. Ronald, who had been out with Ben, came running in at this moment, and stood suddenly still at the sight of a lady in the midst of the shadows. Who was she?—what did she want? Then he saw with a little added astonishment that she was the lady who had walked with the little girl, and sat in the great pew at church. As for Hester, his entrance seemed to bring her back to herself.

‘Who is this?’ she said to Rachel, putting out her hand with a little gesture of invitation which drew Ronald nearer.

‘He’s Miss Isabel’s boy,’ Mrs. Caesar said curtly, taking a great tablecloth from the drawer of the dresser, and proceeding to lay it.

‘I wondered whether it were possible,’ said Hester, sadly. ‘Is he to live here?’

‘If we can keep him, he is,’ said Rachel, with all her usual tartness. ‘But I often think we shall have to send him away, though I’m sure I don’t know who’ll have him, or what’ll become of him.’

‘I am glad he is here,’ said Hester. ‘Does your uncle not take you with him when he goes out?’

‘No,’ said Ronald, answering without shyness. ‘He does my lessons in the morning, though.’

‘No,’ repeated Mrs. Caesar, at whom Hester was looking questioningly, ‘he’s best pleased to be by hisself.’ Then changing her voice into its usual tone, she added, ‘Nobody likes to have a boy rummadging after ’em, except when they’re obliged.’

‘Will you come and rummage at the Parsonage, Ronald?’ said Hester, kindly. ‘Finie is longing to show you her treasures.’

‘I don’t know. We’ll see,’ put in Rachel, before Ronald could answer. ‘Miss Hester, when master goes out like this, there’s never no sayin’ when he’ll be comin’ back. Ye may wait an hour or two yet, an’ a’ for nothin’. Leave it to me to tell him as I can, an’ you go back now.’

Perhaps something of the gloom of the old kitchen had touched the spring of Hester’s brave spirit, and communicated an uneasy depression. It is not impossible to imagine, so little do we know of the invisible forces about us, that a place which has long harboured one prevailing cast of thought should become imbued with it, the atmosphere, so to speak, saturated with its presence. Have we never felt this influence—of coldness, of oppression, of sanctity—ourselves? Certain it is that Hester, who had entered the farm full of resolute determination, became conscious that she was being overpowered by a nervous dread, which conquered her, in spite of her shame at yielding. It seemed to her as difficult now to endure meeting Mr. Oldfield as it had been hard at first to submit to the pang of disappointment. At Rachel’s words she made a step towards the door with a throb of relief, and although she checked herself the impulse proved too strong.

‘I believe you are right, Rachel,’ she said, in a low and constrained voice. ‘I shall trust you to tell me how he bears it—what we shall do. At any moment we will come again. But I do not think that I could myself endure to meet him now.’

As she spoke she saw that Rachel, instead of looking at her, was looking beyond her with a startled countenance. And Hester, turning with a swift presentiment, found herself face to face with the man who once was to have been her husband.

VIII.

Alas ! sad eyes that know too much,
 Turn, turn, oh turn ! look not this way :
 Be wise—be wise ; my sin was such
 I cannot bear your glance to-day.
Hon. Mrs. Knox.

STRANGELY enough, considering the characters of the two, and the comparative preparation which Hester had gone through for this meeting, it was she who was the most outwardly moved. Perhaps it was the preparation itself, and the waiting in the old kitchen, which had so greatly shaken her composure. At all events, although Mr. Oldfield's face changed suddenly, not so much with pallor, or tremor, or amazement, as with the workings of all three, it was Hester who caught at the settle, as if but for its support she must have fallen ; Hester who shrank a little backward, as if even now she would have escaped. It might have been, however, noticed further, that she was the first to recover her self-possession, while the disturbance appeared to increase upon him, and it was she who at length put out her hand, and said in a low voice :

‘You see we have come to find you out, Philip, since you would not come to us.’

‘You are very good,’ he said quickly, and without appearing to notice the warm offered hand. ‘But I go nowhere. And I have chosen this home because it gives me the solitude I prefer.’

The words were more decided than the voice in which they were uttered, but it was evident they were intended to be repellant, and Hester heard them with a slight shiver. The emotion, however, which leapt into her heart at first sight of him had been sufficient to drive from it the dim unreal fancies which the old room had conjured up, and she forgot herself again in concern for him.

‘Philip,’ she said, earnestly, ‘indeed you are not right in choosing this solitude, in thrusting us all away from you. Think how many years have passed, how many friends have waited in vain.’

But although the dim light falling upon his face showed it painfully moved, he only shook his head in answer to her pleading.

‘Your life is buried in this place,’ she went on ; ‘it is not as if you had chosen such an occupation from inclination or liking, or as if you used it as others do. At least, if you will stay here, do not banish, separate yourself ; let in a little light and air.’

She was not of course speaking literally, but as she spoke she could not help glancing round half fearfully and half impatiently at the dark kitchen. Rachel, who had Ronald by the hand, tried at this moment to pass by and leave the two alone; Hester, however, stopped her by a gesture, and, going closer to Mr. Oldfield, laid the hand he had refused to take upon his arm.

'Dear Philip,' she said once more, 'we of all people in the world have a right to speak to you upon one subject. See: I can do so without pain. The sharpest pain that is left to us is that you have visited upon yourself a misfortune as if it were a crime. We have waited all these weeks hoping that you would come to us. Do not grieve us any longer. Come.'

But he shrank more than he had hitherto done. It seemed as if the tenderest and most delicate touch upon the wound he had kept open all these years was unendurable. It is, indeed, impossible for human nature to nurse an exclusive feeling for any length of time without rendering it morbidly sensitive, and there was even a little irritation in his question.

'We! Whom do you mean by we?'

'I mean Agnes,' said Hester, softly; 'she and I are the only two that are left.'

'It's Miss Agnes as is married, an' not Miss Hester,' put in Rachel in a low voice.

'Oh, I know that,' said Mr. Oldfield, still impatiently.

Hester's eyes filled with slow tears. With some women pride would have prevented the attempt she had just made, but her nature was too loving and generous for pride to benumb. Nothing indeed could have more greatly proved her forgetfulness of self, or her womanly sweetness, than her deep longing to give this poor stricken man comfort and strength. And if for a moment she felt an inevitable touch of humiliation in her failure, it was swept away in a rush of infinite pity. He was so changed, so bowed down, so broken. Perhaps in another place the alteration would have met her with something taken from its force, but now the growing darkness was full of grey shadows, and Philip Oldfield had caught something of the shadowy greyness.

She paused for some moments before she spoke again.

'You will not come to see us, then. Surely you do not mean that we are to be like strangers?'

'If it be possible—yes,' he said, hoarsely. 'I have tried to do what I could towards blotting myself out of your sight. You say you are but two—whose fault is that? Do you think either you or I can forget? It is impossible. Looking at you at this moment I see his face between us; I could almost fancy that it has a new horror added to it, as if at finding us here together. Leave me alone with my sad memories. If you can forget, it is because your sorrow has no weight of remorse to keep it like lead upon your heart.' He said this with increasing intensity, thrusting out his thin hands with a pathetic gesture of abandonment, and then

added, softening his voice, 'It is right that we should be strangers, believe me, Hester. My life has touched yours once to fill it with misery, now suffer it to drift apart. To you I can be only a re-awakening of trouble; and to me—to hear and see what recalls those days is, Heaven knows, a worse agony than you would like to inflict upon anyone. If you have failed in what you have tried to do, it has been my fault, not yours: remember that—remember that always.'

It may have been the faint touch of tenderness just discernible in his last words which broke the spell under which Hester had been standing motionless, and scarcely daring to look up, lest the dreadful visions he realized so strongly should meet her eye. There was something in his voice which, more even than the substance of what he said, shook her imagination in a strange and, with her, a very unusual manner. But, as has been said, this scarcely perceptible emotion, which trembled through it as he finished, gave her back her self-control. Her face lighted with a sudden bright smile, such as he remembered of old.

'If you drive me away, I must go,' she said. 'Ronald, will you find Mr. Claughton for me?'

When he joined them, Philip was perfectly courteous, but he moved and spoke like a man oppressed with an intolerable burden. As they stood under the great thatched gateway, Mr. Claughton, wishing him good-bye, said kindly, 'You will come soon to see us? My wife expects you.'

'I am afraid I cannot,' said Philip, in a vague voice. Then he added, more firmly, 'It is, perhaps, better that I should let you understand at once that I neither seek society here nor elsewhere.'

'Yes, we understand. Good night,' said Hester, softly, stopping her brother-in-law from speaking.

The cold twilight was so feeble by this time that their figures, as they went away down the lane, were almost immediately lost in the shadow of the hedge. As for Mr. Oldfield, he was hid under the dark gateway. Was it a picture of their lives?

A YORK AND A LANCASTER ROSE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'JANET'S HOME.'

CHAPTER XI.

JUNO MONETA.

WHEN one's mind is full of a subject, it is curious how frequently little circumstances fall out to bring it before one in unexpected ways, and how fresh lights upon it pour in from every book we take up, or conversation we listen to; that is to say, if we know how to think, and listen, and read to advantage. Rose Ingram, during the last month or so, had made such a large stride in her education as to have reached the point, never reached

at all by some folk, when she could look out for, and gladly take in, mental food that was not forced upon her in the form of lessons; and this question of the theme on 'Money' furnished her with her first experience of the fact alluded to. One thing after another happened to suggest thoughts for the theme, and it really seemed as if everyone conspired to cause pleasant rays of light to play round the dull subject, till it grew beautiful and as interesting as a fairy tale. The evening after her visit to the Home was one of Professor Ingram's open evenings, when the friends of the family and his colleagues at the college dropped in for an hour or two's conversation after dinner. The elder children were always required to appear as usual on these evenings, for Mrs. Ingram thought it good for their manners to be accustomed early to the constraints of society, but no one was expected to notice them, and they need not listen to the conversation that went on unless they liked. They had hitherto voted the notion of *liking* to listen simply ridiculous. Lionel even pronounced it mean, a sort of unworthy pandering to the unreasonableness of elders, which it became the young to stand out against stiffly. 'As if,' he said, 'it was not enough for these old fellows to have all the day to pound at us with their dull stuff, and just because they're such idiots as to like to go on grinding when they might stop, we're to give in to listening to them. They won't catch me. Not if I know it.'

Rose could not help having a vague suspicion that she was acting the part of a sycophant, when, in obedience to a look of invitation from Mrs. Ingram, she left the shadowy corner where Lionel was provoking her to giggle, and seated herself on the sofa by her mother's side, close to a group of gentlemen who were examining a bracelet, a gift from Professor Ingram to her mother, which she had just taken from her arm to show them. It was composed of old Greek silver coins, linked together, and as it passed from hand to hand remarks on the beauty and age of the coins were exchanged. At first these sounded very dull and incomprehensible. Lionel's nonsense was better worth listening to, and Rose seemed likely to get nothing but the satisfaction of having obeyed a look of her mother's to set against the odium she felt she was incurring from her own kind. But as she went on listening the subject seemed to open out; a little light here, a little light there, till she found herself busy packing away the information gained in her memory, in easy words of her own.

Those old coins were real money, then, yet they had been looked on as sacred things at first, and could only be struck in the temples. How odd! It would have been thought sacrilege once for a man's head to have been struck on a coin. The first person who dared to have his likeness upon a piece of money was Alexander the Great, and that was because his courtiers flattered him and made him believe he was a god, Stamped money was a thing sacred to gods and goddesses then at first, and must always have a Divine image impressed upon it; and at first it was to the beautiful goddess of the evening star, worshipped as Love, or to

the blue-eyed goddess of wisdom that the gold and the silver were dedicated. Wisdom and love, why, it was a sort of parable. Did the ancient people think about it, Rose wondered, when they were spending their money? And then her attention was fixed again, as something further was said about the long journeys and voyages that the early traders made. From Babylon, when it was still a city of walls mountain-high, and palaces roofed with silver and gold: from forests of spices and fragrant woods further east: across burning deserts in slow-paced caravans through the Tyre that Solomon visited: in small ships, tossing on treacherous seas, till they gained the harbour of some fair Greek town, and saw gleaming above it the white marble palace of Aphrodite, the sailors' patron goddess, where they would repair first of all to pay their tribute silver, as a thankoffering for the guidance that had brought them so far through so many perils. The picture of all this came before Rose's eyes, and one of the gentlemen, as he turned to give back the bracelet to Mrs. Ingram, was struck with the eager intelligent expression of her face.

'You take an interest in antiquities I see, my dear,' he said, kindly.

'No; oh, no, I know nothing at all about them,' cried Rose, suddenly overwhelmed with false 'shame at the notion of the disgust Lionel would feel for her if she acknowledged such a taste. 'I—I was only listening a little. I only thought it odd that these things—such a beautiful thing as this (touching a large coin with a head of Athene on it) should ever have been money, like shillings and half-crowns, and that it should have been made in a temple.'

'I am glad you can see that it is a beautiful thing,' said the gentleman, smiling. 'And as to its being made in a temple—do you happen to know how money comes to be called money?'

'No, indeed I don't; I did not know there was a reason, I thought it was just its common name.'

'Ah, but what is that? This common name has all the history we have been talking about this evening wrapped up in it. The word comes from the title of the goddess Juno Moneta, from the Juno the admonisher, in whose temples the Roman coins were struck, and it is a proof now of what surprised you, that in the beginning coined silver was something that had been dedicated.'

'Oh, thank you,' said Rose, eagerly; 'I am glad you told me that. It seems to make the other things, the past things I mean, nearer having the name still.'

'Right, my little girl,' said Professor Ingram, who had been listening for the last minute, and who now put his hand on Rose's head with a more approving pressure than any precedence ticket had ever won her before. 'You have got hold of a right notion there. It is one of the words that are like telescopes, through which one can look at past times and bring them near. I am glad you have found it out.'

'I don't think I did, papa,' said Rose, honestly. 'I did not mean all you have said just now; I did not think of the word being a telescope.'

‘But I can see it is,’ she thought to herself; ‘and here is another idea for my theme. Oh dear, how easy it is growing! I only hope I shall be able to get the right words, and find time to write them all down properly. I do wish I could sometimes be half-an-hour alone, so that I might work without the others interrupting me every minute, and thinking it odd if I write a line more than I need.’

The kind pressure on her head had given Rose a great deal of courage, and when a minute or two later the signal for going to bed came, and she wished her father good night, she lingered by his side, for he was not talking to anyone just then, and said, ‘Papa, would you mind if, for one or two mornings, I were to come down into your study for half-an-hour before breakfast when Claude goes there to do his Greek? I only want to sit at the little desk by the side window, and I won’t make the least little noise, not so much as a screech with a slate pencil.’

The Professor hoped not indeed; he was, to tell the truth, a little startled at the request, for he valued the quiet of his morning hours beyond anything in the day, and it had cost him a struggle when he had felt it right to have his eldest son with him at that time. The prospect of his beloved study becoming a public resort for any one of his children who took a fancy to be studious was a little appalling; and yet was he to spend himself day and night in trimming and brightening the lamp of learning for the benefit of strangers, and not be careful to cherish the flame when it burned for his own? Silently the small sacrifice was made, and Rose from that moment was taken a step nearer to her father’s heart, and passed out from being the mere child whom other people were to be paid to tend carefully, into an individual charge of his own, his future companion and friend.

‘Very well, my dear,’ he said; ‘you may come if you like; that is to say, if your coming will not interfere with other more important morning duties.’

‘It sha’n’t, indeed, papa,’ said Rose, earnestly. ‘I will take the same time for everything; it shall only be that I will get up half-an-hour earlier before the fire is lighted, and nurse herself says it is not necessary for me to have a fire to dress by, because I am——’

‘A Lancaster Rose,’ said the Professor, pinching her pink cheek. ‘Ah well, let us see how long the fancy for early rising will last. If you really do prefer study to comfort, I shall begin to think there may be some use in you.’

The frost was continuing late into the year, and the cold strengthening with the lengthening days, and it cost Rose something of a struggle to jump up half-an-hour earlier than usual, and wash and dress in the cold, with only such assistance as could be got from nurse Lewis by running across the passage to the night nursery, where she slept with the three little ones, and back again to her own room. But the effort was overpaid by the satisfaction of being first in the study, and of venturing to stir and pile up the fire, which was not burning very brightly, and to straighten

the cushion of her father's chair, and blow the dust gently from his papers, and place a clean quill pen by his writing-case. Then she drew up the blinds to let in all the light there was, and settled herself in her distant corner, and had written the first sentence of her theme before her father and Claude appeared. The Professor did not notice her little arrangements for his comfort, but as he looked across his writing-table and nodded a silent morning greeting to Rose in her nook by the window, he thought that the room looked brighter than usual, and he came to the conclusion that the presence of a Lancaster Rose, blooming quietly in a distant corner of his study, would be no hindrance to his work, but rather something refreshing to rest his eyes on when he chanced to look up from the columns of figures and abstruse signs he was engaged upon. The morning's sun crept into the room through the frosted window-panes, and the three heads continued to be bent over their papers. Rose's pen moved quickly, for she had thought out all she wanted to say the night before, and the words came more easily than she had expected. She began by expressing the thought her father had suggested about the word money being a telescope through which one could look at distant things and bring them near; and then she related the fancied history of a shilling, tracing the silver of which it was made back to a coin with the image of Athene on it, which had been struck in a temple at Athens, and which, after buying many things in the hands of successive owners at Athens, and Alexandria, and Carthage, and Rome, came into the possession of an early Christian, and was melted down by him into a lump of pure silver again, from his dislike to carry the image of a heathen goddess about with him. It was dug up from under the ruins of an ancient house in Rome by a Jew in the middle ages, found its way to Edward the First's mint, and was sent out among the first pieces of silver, with a cross on the reverse side that owned rims; went on the last crusade, slipped from a crusader's pouch into a crevice in the ground in the Holy Land, and after a long interval of repose, and sundry other findings, and losings, and smeltings, and recoinings, found itself a Victoria shilling, and was surprised at the different amount of pleasure and service its purchasing qualities represented to different owners; the silver retaining all the time under its various forms, the consciousness of the beautiful image of wisdom, and of the sign of the Cross, that had once been impressed upon it, and testing the purposes to which it was put by these standards. Of course this history in Rose's hands could not with all diligence be compressed into one or two mornings' work; but she did not weary of her early rising, and before the day arrived when the themes had to be given in, the Professor had grown so accustomed to see her in her place by the window that he felt quite sorry when he found she was preparing to carry her writing-case and little inkstand away with her when the school-room breakfast-bell rang.

'Are you not coming here again,' he asked, stopping her before she reached the door. 'You need not be afraid of coming; I like to see your

desk on the side-table all day, and I shall miss you in the morning if you don't come now. You seem to have made the fire burn brighter since you came, for Claude and I have not needed to grumble at the cold as much as usual this week, and though I have said nothing hitherto I have found out that clean pens and blotting paper don't get on my desk by accident, and that they are useful. I shall always look for them now.'

'O Papa, how good of you. I thought I was only to come till I had finished my theme for Mr. Henderson; but if I might always do my English lessons here, I really think I could do them, you know, instead of just scratching through, as one must when one has to scramble them in at odds and ends of time between the French and music and dancing and German. I should like it.'

'Let me see what you have got there—ten pages of letter paper. Does Mr. Henderson allow you to send in such long themes?'

'Not generally; but this is an extra theme, for which we have had a long time given us. He chose the subject for the first class, and then he said we middle ones might do it if we liked; and he is going to give a prize for once; I think it is a coin, a bit of Persian money, very old, that he had shown to the girls in his first class at one of their lectures; but, of course, we middle ones have nothing to do with that.'

'Well, I will just glance through what you have written, to see whether you really are fit to study alone, or whether it would be waste of time. I can't say much for the handwriting, Rose; I should call that a scramble.'

'Yes, I know; but my fingers were rather cold.'

'Ah, yes, indeed I should think so; you were sitting in that far corner by the draughty window; I ought to have thought of that before—why did you perch yourself there?'

'I thought I ought to keep quite out of your way and Claude's, and I did not mind the cold so very much.'

A curious look came over the Professor's face at this; but now he had turned the second leaf of Rose's manuscript, and was becoming absorbed in what he read. Rose had not bargained for her bold experiment in essay-writing coming under his notice, and she stood watching his face as he rapidly turned the leaves with a good deal of trepidation. Was he biting his lips to save himself from laughing—he turns back and reads a page slowly through a second time—there must be some terrible mistake there, and yet surely he does not look displeased. Rose continued in doubt till the last sentence was read, and her father raised his eyes to her face, and then she could not mistake the smile of approval which she had seen once or twice reward some of Claude's work, and envied him for winning. How odd that it should come for her! But her father did not praise her, it was not the Professor's way to praise people for successful work, only he could not help the smile coming. He folded the sheets and gave them back into her hand.

'There are some droll mistakes and anachronisms, my dear, and it is

rather long; yet I think Mr. Henderson will be pleased, and, certainly, if you can do work like that you ought not to have to scramble for time to do it in. I will make a place for you at my own table by the fire, and shall expect you every morning. I shall see what you are doing, and, perhaps, we might find a spare half-hour sometimes for a little Natural History or Physics with Claude; should you like that?’

‘I don’t know about the things themselves, Papa, because I have not tried them, and Lionel says that Physics are dreadfully stuffy; but I do like, oh, ever so much, that you should let me do them with you; I shall feel like Claude, almost as if——’

‘Well, go on.’

‘Papa, I was going to say, as if you cared for me as much as you care for Claude.’

The Professor drew her on to his knee, and kissed her gravely on the forehead. ‘My dear child, don’t you know that I care for all my children, and love them dearly, and all alike?’

‘Yes, Papa,’ said Rose, ‘I do know that in a sort of way, of course; but when you talk to me, and teach me things that you like yourself, then I *feel* that you care for me, and know about me, and it is very nice.’ The Professor kissed her again, and let her go. He was not a man of many words, except on his favourite topics, but he was not so engrossed in these but that thoughts from quite opposite regions were welcomed and entertained when they came to him; and, strange as it may seem, his little daughter’s words had suggested to him a train of meditation that employed him during the rest of his hour of quiet.

Was not her experience towards him, the experience of souls towards their Heavenly Father when He teaches them, through struggles and effort and pain, the higher things of the spiritual life? The lessons themselves may not be welcome at first; they may cost too much effort to learn, but does there not ever come with them, to sweeten them, the fuller understanding of the Father’s personal love to the soul, which differs from the general belief in His love for all His creatures, by growing even sweeter and more intimate as the mind and will of the Father is revealed and the close fellowship attained to? Would it not be well, taking a leaf out of the child’s heart, that is near to the kingdom of heaven, to welcome all hard lessons with joy, as tokens of personal love and discriminating favour?

Rose found that breakfast was half over when she got upstairs, and she was received with a great deal of curious questioning.

‘What could she have found to talk to papa about?’

‘Well, you are an idiot,’ pronounced Lionel, ‘to have let papa get hold of you and entrap you into the study of a morning. Why, I tremble in my shoes every time he speaks to me, for fear he should invite me. The other evening as we were coming downstairs to tea I heard him asking Claude if he thought I wanted more time to prepare my lessons, or if I was inclined to take up a new subject. Did not I turn round and cut

up to the attics, and dodge about in the dark till I hoped he'd forgotten all about me. I did not think you'd have been such a sheep, Rose, as to poke yourself into the lion's den of your own accord; but I shall not pity you now, whatever lot of work you get imposed upon you.'

'Rose does not need to be pitied,' said Florence in a low voice, and in German. 'She gets all the help: other people work as hard, and it does them no good. Rose is everybody's favourite, now. Mamma's since ever so long, and Aunt Rachel's always, and now papa is taking her up.'

'What does it signify?' said good-natured, lazy Maggie. 'I don't see either that it does Rose any good; it only brings her trouble. The other day when Nurse was ill, and mamma had to go out to a dinner-party, she sent Rose to sit in the night-nursery till the little ones were asleep, because she trusted her more than Anne; and we'd just settled to a delightful game of Flower Loto, and Rose missed it all. And I am sure no one need envy her getting up in the dark to go to papa. For my part I'd rather not be a favourite and do as I like; favourites are always said to be horrid in books, though I'm sure Rose isn't horrid.'

'I should not mind what anybody said, or anything I had to do, if it was of any use,' said Florence, not addressing anyone in particular, but speaking down into a book that, contrary to all rules, she was holding open on her lap under the table. She had been working at her theme for the last fortnight as diligently as Rose, and taking only spare moments and odds and ends of time to work in; but then Florence had long since established her right to her own odds and ends of time, and no one in the house any longer thought it worth while to make any claim upon them.

The themes had to be given in that afternoon, and the Fräulein allowed a few minutes' grace and English talking after breakfast to Mr. Henderson's three pupils to fold their manuscripts and write the mottoes neatly on the outside.

Maggie confessed to having nothing to fold. 'I began to write,' she said, showing a sheet of paper with one page half-filled, 'but I soon got tired; and, as we are not obliged to do anything this time, I stopped. I began, "Money is generally made of gold and silver and copper, but it might just as well be shells or anything else. It does not really matter whether people have a great deal of money or very little. Corn is the only thing that matters, because Midas when he could turn everything into gold had asses' ears, and nearly starved, and the Spaniards were just the same when they had conquered America." I got so far as that, and I thought it was rather nice; and I was intending to put in Nurse's story about a miser in Wales who starved himself to death for my illustration, but I broke the point of my pencil, and Claude looked over my shoulder and laughed, and altogether I thought I might as well give it up. Do let me look what you are writing for your motto, Rose. Why do you put that curious sort of F at the beginning? What does it mean?'

'It is a Runic letter like the Runes in the Magic Ring, and it stands

for money. The sentence I am writing now is the saying that belonged to the letter, "Money breeds discord among brethren ; a wolf is bred up in a wood." I read it in a book that lay open on the table in the study, and I thought it would do nicely for my motto.'

'The last part of the sentence is nonsense,' objected Florence.

'No ; I think it means that powerful things grow up in the dark from little beginnings, and that partly suits the theme. It was that bit made me choose the saying for my motto ; and after all, you know, the mottoes are only written outside instead of our names, to distinguish the papers ; for all the themes are to be sent together, that we middle-class girls may seem to have a chance of the prize, though of course we have not really.'

'No, I suppose not,' said Florence with a sigh, and an affectionate glance at her own neatly-folded paper. 'The first-class girls are so big, and some of them so clever, there's no use in our thinking of the prize.'

But Florence did think of it, and for once in her life sat with her German exercise book before her for the best part of the morning, hardly making any advance in her work. Instead of the printed sentences a vision rose before her eyes of the crowded class-room, and Mr. Henderson at his desk reading out her motto and calling on its owner to come forward and take the prize. No one would see her rise from her back seat, for everybody would be looking at the front benches, and expecting one of the first-class girls, with smart hats and turned-up hair, to rise and come forward. The other students would perhaps not see her till she was close to the desk, and then what a start of surprise there would be ! 'The third little Ingram ! the plain one of the four Ingrams.' She had heard herself described so a few days ago, with a very unchildlike pang of pain ; by and bye, perhaps, it would be the clever one, the one who always was best in the class.

Florence had often been present at the yearly distribution of medals and prizes at the school her brothers attended, and she had seen Claude go up again and again, and heard whispers of astonishment among the spectators, that such a little fellow should carry off all the honours over his seniors' heads, and the success and praise had seemed to her very sweet. If she could once have a taste of the same triumph, she fancied she should be happy for the rest of her life, and should be able to bear without discomfort the snubs and teasing and little marks of unpopularity which her uppishness and love of interfering brought upon her from her class-mates and brothers and sisters. One could bear to know one was a little disliked, she thought, if one was envied too. She could never be popular, like Rose, or admired for her beauty, like Lily ; but it would be something to be acknowledged the cleverest of the sisterhood, and she thought she had a right to that distinction at least. Having settled this point with herself, she was the less disposed to receive meekly the Fräulein's reproof for idleness when she brought up her work for correction at twelve o'clock, but stood the picture of gloomy sullenness while the Fräulein pointed out careless mistakes, and expressed her disappoint-

ment at such a performance from Florence. If it had been Maggie or Lily, or even Rose, the Fräulein confessed she should have been less surprised, but when Florence could do so much better, it was very disappointing to find her imitating the others in their careless habits. It was not what was expected of her.

'No,' thought Florence, 'that is just what is so unfair. She knows I'm the cleverest; but I'm kept down, and made to give up to the two stupid elders all the same, and then scolded when for once I don't do my work best. It's horrid to be neither the eldest nor the youngest, but just an ugly middle one whom nobody likes.'

The poor child took the discontented temper out with her on her walk, and could not understand what the others found so very delightful in meeting Mrs. Fanshawe and Lucy at the end of the square, and being invited to accompany them to a nurseryman's in the neighbourhood, where Mrs. Fanshawe had business; nor why Rose and Maggie should go into such stupid ecstasies of joy, because they found they could buy a pot of dwarf tulips for fourpence, and were able to muster the necessary coppers from their jacket pockets. They talked going home of presenting the tulips to the Fräulein, to stand on her work-table, because it was known that she was fond of tulips; 'and then,' said Lily, 'we can all see and smell them, and I dare say she will let us water them in turn, so they'll be as good as our own, and we shall have the pleasure of making a present too.' Florence wondered how they could go on talking about such a trifle so long. She did not want to make the Fräulein a present, and she did not believe that the others liked her any better than she did, or so well. They grumbled a great deal more about her strictness as to the German speaking, and were only in a good humour with her this morning because they had thought of making her a present. It was by that fickle, backwards and forwards way, that Rose imposed on people, and passed for being so very good-natured. Florence chose to believe that there was hypocrisy in Rose's frequent little attentions to the Fräulein, and while brooding over imaginary wrong-doing, let herself grow crosser and crosser. As they were mounting the stairs, on their return from their walk, they were stopped on the second landing, and called into the drawing-room to see grandmamma, who had come in for a few minutes on her way from somewhere else. Grandmamma did not usually make remarks on the children's looks, but to-day the contrast of Florence's dull face, among so many smiling ones, struck her.

'Florence does not do you so much credit as the rest of the party,' she observed in a low tone to Mrs. Ingram. 'I hope the Fräulein is not working her too hard; a little girl of her age has no business to come back from a walk with that dull, bored look on her face.'

Mrs. Ingram's anxieties were up in arms in a moment; and Nurse, who had brought Tiny downstairs, and was standing near enough to overhear the whisper, put in her word.

'She had noticed herself how tired Miss Florence looked when she

came up from the school-room before she went out—tired and out of sorts like—so that she could hardly keep from crying when Master Willie shot at her with his pop-gun.'

'Ah, yes,' cried Mrs. Ingram, 'the poor dear child! I know so well the state my head is in, when I can't bear that pop-gun of darling Willie's; and I dare say the good Fräulein, who has nerves of iron herself, has been finding fault with her, while her poor head was racked. Thank you, dear Grandmamma, for drawing my attention to her. I will think of something to do for her.'

The result of Mrs. Ingram's thought was, that she appeared in the school-room after dinner, and with many gentle apologies to the Fräulein for interfering, made known her wish that Florence should be excused attending the literature class that afternoon, and should come down into the drawing-room and sit with her while her sisters were away.

'It will be a nice change for you, darling, for I think you look a little unwell,' she said, putting her soft white hand against Florence's sulky face. 'Lady Dunallan is coming this afternoon, and she always asks to see one of you school-room children when she calls.'

'But oh, Mamma!' exclaimed Maggie; 'Lady Dunallan won't care to see Florence. It's Rose and Lily she always asks for. She never takes any notice of Florence, never. I've observed it.'

So had Florence; but Maggie need not, she thought, have been so eager to proclaim the fact to everyone. Under the influence of mamma's kind touch, the evil temper was passing away, and she was just going to assure mamma cheerfully that she felt quite well, and could go to her class as usual, but now she changed her mind. If it was true that she had a less share of favour than other people, why should she miss a chance of being petted and made much of, even though it did come to her on slightly false pretences? Yet Florence was too honest a child not to feel uncomfortable under the anxious looks that mamma turned on her when she came into the drawing-room, and settled herself slowly and languidly with her work-box on a stool in the window-recess, a long way from mamma's sofa. She knew it was ill temper and not weariness that made her choose to sit by herself instead of chatting with mamma as any of the others would have done. She knew she could shake it off and be bright if she chose, but she would not make the effort. Willie, and Trottie, and Tiny came down while nurse had her dinner, and Florence sat on looking out of the window into the dull square, and occasionally putting a stitch into her kettle-holder, but never offering to help mamma to amuse them. Willie made an assault at her with his pop-gun, but mamma called him off.

'I leave you to yourself, dearest,' she said, gently, 'because I see you are a little tired to-day, and quiet is good for you. I like quiet myself.'

But mamma did not get it while the little ones were with her; for Willie was in boisterous spirits, and Trottie bent on exercising his new accomplishment of stamping about the room, and falling down and

needing to be picked up again every two or three minutes. Rose would have had them all round her, and made up a play in which she would have been as merry as the babies, and mamma would have enjoyed looking on. Florence wondered why she could not do the same, and sat half pitying, half hating herself, for the ill humour that kept her miserable and helpless when she might have been useful and happy. She thought it was only the comfort of one afternoon her discontent was robbing her of, and did not know how many other temptations, this one yielded to, would bring in its train. After the children had returned to the nursery afternoon visitors began to flock in, and Florence drew herself as far as possible out of sight to escape observation ; but she began to feel dull and lonely for something to turn her thoughts in a pleasanter direction. The table, on which lay the drawing-room books the children were allowed to read, stood at the other end of the long room, but the sides of the window recess were furnished with small book-cases, fitted with prettily-bound volumes. The lower shelf held volumes of the *Poets Illustrated*, and these Florence was allowed to turn over ; on the upper shelf stood a row of standard novels, which a well-understood order forbade the school-room girls to touch. Florence had read the titles on their backs many a time, for the recess had long been her favourite drawing-room sulking-place, and one day, long ago, when she had been told to put the book-case tidy, she had opened a volume as she was restoring it to its place, and had read a sentence or two on the second page. It seemed to be something interesting about a clever little girl, who, like herself, was not a particular favourite with anyone, and who went one cold winter's day into an inner drawing-room and took a book. Florence had often wondered since how the tale went on, and whether the little girl got into trouble for her boldness, and whether the grown-up people in the house grew kinder to her after awhile. She had never forgotten the outside of the book, bright red with black lines, and *Jane Eyre* printed in gold letters on the back. Since it was about a child, this must be a book that children could understand, and it must have got into the forbidden row by mistake. Florence looked round ; two stout old ladies had just come in, and having drawn their chairs in front of mamma's sofa, were already deep in 'cook stories ;' they always stayed a long time when they came, and their 'cook stories' were not funny, like Aunt Judy's, but very tedious to listen to. Never again, Florence thought, should she have such a good opportunity of finding out what was the next thing that happened to Jane Eyre, after she had hidden behind the curtain ; and if mamma asked what she was reading, she would tell the truth when the ladies were gone. It did not seem as if there could be much harm. Florence took down the book, opened it cautiously in her lap, and began to read, and the interest of the story absorbed her entirely. She had meant only to turn a few pages and find out that one thing ; but every page suggested a new subject of anxiety that must be satisfied. She felt as if she had got out of herself, into a new world of deep satisfying

interest, more real than the one she had left, and the only bit of herself that remained was an underlying dread, lest anything should come to shatter the spell, and bring her back to the everyday life she had escaped from.

‘Florence,’ mamma’s voice called at last, ‘here is Lady Dunallan; come and shake hands with her.’

Florence started violently, hastily pushed the book back into its place, and came forward, feeling quite dazed, almost as if she had had a great fall and been stunned by it. She could not get up a smile or a civil answer, when Lady Dunallan took her limp hand and good-naturedly asked one or two matter-of-course questions about her lessons and classes. She was still feeling as if she were Jane Eyre, just arriving at her new school, and to have other ideas thrust upon her was a great plague.

‘Florence is not quite well to-day, we think,’ mamma said in a tone of apology for Florence’s gruff, short answers. ‘That is why I am keeping her with me this afternoon. The school hours are rather long for her perhaps.’

‘I should have sent her up into the nursery and made her skip for an hour instead of letting her sit and read,’ said Lady Dunallan, who being a very old friend and relative of Mrs. Ingram’s, did not scruple to speak her mind. ‘The book element is a great deal too strong in this house, and it will make you all very dull boys and girls if you don’t take care. I say the same thing to my great-nieces when I come into their school-room and find, instead of skipping-ropes and battledore and shuttlecock, the girls huddled round the fire reading novels. I am not at all surprised that, though I have several namesakes among my numerous goddaughters, I have only one Lancaster Rose. Where is she to-day? I hope she is not turning into a premature grown-up novel-reading young lady.’

‘No, oh dear, no,’ exclaimed Mrs. Ingram emphatically. ‘My husband quite agrees with you in disliking novel-reading for children. He likes lessons to be lessons and play to be play, and the story-books are given out quite sparingly. We can’t help having books of all kinds about in this house, but the girls know quite well that they are trusted not to open any tempting looking ones without express permission. It is a point of honour among us. Florence was looking at pictures just now, not reading. She knows which are the forbidden shelves and would not transgress I am confident.’

‘I will speak presently,’ Florence thought, ‘not just now while Lady Dunallan is looking at me, but when she has gone I certainly think I will tell mamma. Yet I do so want to know how that story goes on till the little girl has grown up, and if I tell I shall be obliged to promise not to touch it again. If Lady Dunallan stays till after I am called to tea I will give myself the chance of one more look at the book before I tell. It shall depend on that, for I can’t really speak till I am alone with mamma.’

Florence had the opportunity for which she bargained with her conscience, but being half-hearted in her resolve hesitated till she lost it. Professor Ingram came into the drawing-room just as Lady Dunallan rose to take leave, and detained her a minute to tell her of her goddaughter's studious fit, and of the pleasant surprise he had had that morning in reading her essay.

'It was a very crude, funny performance of course,' he said, 'and I could hardly help laughing while I read, but I confess it pleased me particularly. It was so genuine and thoughtful. I could not have believed unless I had had proof of it that so much thought could have come out of that little head. Claude's compositions take me by surprise sometimes too, but I did not expect to find that we had another incipient genius among our flock.'

Lady Dunallan shook her head. 'Take care what you are about,' she said. 'Don't spoil my flower by planting her in a hot bed of competition and forced intellectuality. Don't make her too clever.'

'But it is not only in her studies that Rose has made such a start forward lately,' Mrs. Ingram interposed fondly; 'she is coming out in all sorts of ways. I would not praise her to anyone but you, but as you are her godmother I must tell you that she is becoming quite a comfort to me. She has found out many little ways of helping me that I should never have expected from her. I don't know what gave the impulse unless it was a visit to some poor people with Aunt Rachel that seems to have set her thinking about the use children may be to their elders; but her devotion to me has come like a sweet surprise and refreshment just when I was feeling to want it.'

The tears came into Mrs. Ingram's eyes, and Lady Dunallan stooped and kissed her.

'My dear, you must try and keep up your spirits. I fear I have stayed too long and tired you, for you are looking very wan. I should have liked to have seen my Lancaster Rose, but I won't wait any longer. I will look in again soon to inquire the fate of the essay, and I shall bring something with me as a supplementary prize that will perhaps counteract the book fever a little. Don't say anything, however, for my plan is not quite matured; it has only flashed into my head this minute.'

Professor Ingram went downstairs to put Lady Dunallan into her carriage, and Florence was left alone with her mother. She had been a good deal bewildered with all this talk about Rose. It is always a little perplexing to young people to hear conversation about themselves among their elders not intended for their ears, for they seldom quite understand its tone. Florence could not see that Rose had been doing anything lately to deserve so much praise, and the jealous temper to which she had been giving way took fresh offence. Mamma was lying back on the sofa very tired, but with a happy smile on her face that came, Florence felt sure, from thoughts of Rose; it would be very hard to have to disturb her to confess a fault that proved her so inferior to her sister.

Florence hesitated and hesitated, and the Professor's step was heard re-ascending the stairs.

'You had better run off and get ready for tea, Florence dear,' mamma said. 'Papa likes to be alone with me at this hour, and I think I hear the Fräulein's knock at the front door now.'

Florence walked slowly to the school-room half-glad, half-sorry that she had not spoken. Behind her uncomfortable thoughts there lay the bright region of the story, and she soon determined to let herself get back there and so escape from self-accusation and discontent.

Her sisters had a great deal to tell her about the giving in of the essays, Mr. Henderson and Lucy Fanshawe, and they chattered incessantly all tea-time, but Florence scarcely heard a word. She was going over and over every incident of the story as far as she had read and wondering about the end. She did not say to herself in so many words that she would look out for opportunities of repeating her disobedience before she confessed it, but she dwelt on the pleasure she had had, and prepared herself to find the next temptation overwhelming when it came.

(To be continued.)

HALF A CENTURY AGO.

CHAPTER VII.

WITH few adventures, our travellers passed through Italy, and Sir Nicholas resolved to pass over the Simplon into Switzerland, which was effected notwithstanding the early season, though not without slight mishaps.

Our first adventure was not an agreeable one; we were obliged to leave the carriage and to walk some distance in the snow, whilst it was being extricated from a deep snowdrift. We were enclosed on every side by mountains, on which no trace of any human being could be discovered; forests of larch were here and there to be seen. The wind was bleak, and the whole scene was one of dreariness and desolation. Hitherto no sound had reached our ears but the oaths of our postilions who were employed in extricating the carriage; but just as this was effected we heard the tinkling of a bell, and presently saw a procession of monks slowly ascending a neighbouring path which led, as the postilion told us, to a little village where they were going to administer the Holy Sacrament to some dying person. Nothing could be more in unison with the stillness and solemnity of the scene, which I shall never forget.

When we reached the village of Simplon we were quite cheered by the cordial reception we met with from the German innkeeper and his little family. They welcomed us with a double portion of hospitality in consequence of the scarcity of travellers at that early season, and used all their efforts to dissuade my father from continuing our journey, as they said that we should infallibly be swallowed up in an avalanche or whirl-

wind of snow. This advice, however, was too interesting to follow, and my father made all his arrangements for crossing the mountain, or rather descending it, on the following day. Meanwhile, my little brother and I were amusing ourselves in the snow, hunting for wild flowers: I well remember my delight when Tom brought me the first specimen I had ever seen of the lovely little *Soldanella alpina*. Our dinner at Simplon is memorable: after vainly endeavouring to demolish the remains of some venerable cow, we feasted on a dish of fritters, so delicate and tempting in appearance that they would have graced the table of an alderman. We of course congratulated ourselves on having found such young and tender chickens on the top of Mont Simplon, when suddenly my father exclaimed, 'Clara, you have been eating frogs! Qu'est-ce que vous appelez ce gibier là?' he said, turning to the innkeeper. 'Oh, monsieur, ce sont de ces petites choses qui sautent dans l'eau, des grenouilles que nous appelons cela!'

The next day one of our postilions grew very saucy, and as we were completely in his power, this would have proved a great annoyance if my father had not recollected the magical effect of a military order in Italy, and having seized an opportunity when the postilion was not looking to uncover his star, which he had put on for precaution, the fellow became as meek and manageable as a lamb.

At the time we passed through Coppet, Madame de Stäel was residing there. We heard that she was not popular amongst her country people; but whether she was most disliked and dreaded by her brother and sister philosophers, or by the religious and domestic class of Genevese, I was too young to understand or to inquire. My father now particularly regretted the pleasant little *partie carrée* which he was to have had with her at M. de Palmella's in 1813, when she was prevented by the death of her son from fulfilling the engagement, as it would have afforded him an excuse for calling at Coppet, and giving me a peep at the lioness. Her son the Baron Auguste de Stäel I have often met in after years at the Palmellas, with whose family the De Stäels are connected by the House of Holstein. Coppet was the favourite retreat of M. Neckar, her father, whose name is so connected with the early reign of poor Louis XVI. We caught a distant glimpse of Mont Blanc on leaving Coppet.

We spent a few pleasant days at Vevay, where we became acquainted with two nice little Swiss girls, Elise Monnet and Emilie something else. I was just at the age when all little girls think they must have a 'friend' of their own choosing, and as I had not been allowed in Portugal to mix much with children of my own age, I was most anxious to expend all the romantic affection which had been accumulating in my heart upon the first young lady of fourteen or fifteen whom I should happen to meet.

April 28.—Slept at Rastadt; passed through Ettingen, where the unfortunate young Duc d'Enghien was arrested by the orders of Napoleon, and whence he was taken to Paris to be murdered in cold blood. My father had been acquainted with him in early youth.

Carlsruhe is without exception the prettiest town I have seen on the Continent; but it looks dull and uniform, like its noble and thirty-two quartered inhabitants. Twenty years before, my father had dined at the court of the late Grand Duke, in company with his daughter, the late Empress of Russia, who was then about eleven years of age, and according to the rules of German etiquette took precedence of her mother; the latter, a second wife, being married *d main gauche*, not having proved her thirty-two quarters of noble ancestry.

Whilst we were on our road to Mannheim, my father told us a very interesting story connected with his early campaigns in 1792, when he was serving in the army of the Duke of Brunswick.

Towards the middle of December 1791, he left Coblenz with some important despatches, and after having travelled night and day without stopping for nearly eleven days, he found himself so ill on his arrival at Mannheim, that he was obliged to throw himself upon a bed at the principal inn, and having placed his despatches in a place of security, he soon became delirious and lost all recollection. The servant who had accompanied him from Coblenz was a German totally unacquainted with any language but his own, and as my father was only a beginner in German, he hired a French *valet de place* at the beginning of his illness, in order to communicate with him the more easily.

On coming to his senses, after an interval of some days during which he had suffered from a violent fever, the first object he saw was a young and beautiful woman, a perfect stranger to him, sitting by his bedside giving directions to an old servant who was also a stranger. He thought he must be still delirious and attempted to speak; but the fair vision placed her finger on his lips, and having given him his usual medicine she left him to the care of her grey-haired servant, whose mattress was placed in a corner of the room. The old man refused to answer any questions, but told my father that the Baronne de Ronvers would receive him in her apartments as soon as he was allowed by the physician to leave his room. Of course my father made all possible haste to get well, and was more obedient to the doctor's prescriptions than he might otherwise have been. At length he was able to walk across the gallery to her apartments; she received him most kindly, and in answer to all his enthusiastic but heartfelt expressions of gratitude, simply said that no one could have acted otherwise, had their interest been called forth in the way in which hers had been. She said that she was sitting one evening alone in her drawing-room, when the door was burst open by a man, who exclaimed, 'For God's sake, help me to save my poor sick master! my comrade will murder him if some one does not help me!' Madame de Ronvers then discovered that this was the servant of the dying officer in the next room, and upon inquiry she found that the French *valet de place*, having discovered where my father kept his purse, thought that the safest way of securing it would be to suffocate him by pressing his jugular vein; and hoping the better to escape suspicion if he had a companion in crime,

proposed a share of the profits as a reward to the poor stupid German if he would help him in the transaction. The latter had the presence of mind to conceal his feelings, and pretended to enter into the scheme; but the moment that he had an opportunity he rushed to the adjoining apartment, and the adventure interested Madame de Ronvers so much that she determined to act the part of a *sœur de charité*. The intending murderer must have got scent of the new turn of affairs, for he never returned to the hotel. Madame de Ronvers and her old servant had attended my father night and day during his illness; but upon the first return of reason she withdrew her personal care of him, and now she requested him to discontinue his visits, as she was in a very unprotected situation, and wished to give no ground for calumny to the world.

Poor woman—one might almost say poor girl, for she was only two-and-twenty—she had led a very strange life. At the age of seventeen she had been appointed maid of honour to the Margravine of Hesse-Darmstadt. She was extremely pretty, and the Margrave took to persecuting her with attentions which excited the jealousy of the Margravine. The poor girl, in desperation, resolved to marry the first man who made her an offer, and married the Baron de Ronvers, a spendthrift and a gamester. He was head over ears in debt; his nominally large fortune belonged to his creditors, and he was now at Berlin, where his wife was hastening to join him when her carriage, horses, and part of her baggage were seized at Mannheim by persons who had traced her there, and she was obliged to stay at the hotel there until she could procure remittances.

As soon as my father recovered, he left Mannheim (paying, among other items in his bill, for his own coffin, which had been ordered in expectation of his death), and heard no more of his kind friend until 1802, when, during his residence with my mother at Paris, he called upon his old acquaintance the Duke of Fitz James. The old man, whose memory was impaired by age and dissipation, suddenly said, 'Apropos, Traut, vous rappelez vous de la Baronne de Ronvers, qui vous a soigné quand vous étiez si malade à Mannheim? elle est venue l'autre jour me demander de vos nouvelles, et je lui ai dit que vous étiez marié,—Lieutenant-Colonel—enfin tout ce que je savais.' 'Et son adresse—vous a-t-elle donné son adresse?' said my father, who was already feasting on the pleasure of making her known to my mother, who knew and loved us as yet only by name. 'Ma foi, mon ami, je l'ai oublié—au reste elle est bien changée!' My father tried every means of discovering her address, but in vain. As the name of Ronvers belonged to the *ancien régime*, she had probably been obliged to take her own family name, which he could not discover, and thus lost all trace of her.

In 1815, as we went through Mannheim, he left us in the carriage while he went to the Hôtel de la Cour to inquire how long its owner had been dead. What was his surprise at finding him still alive, though very old and paralytic, but still able to recollect the whole story of my father and the Baronne. My father heard from him that the poor Baronne had died

two years before in the utmost distress, to which she had been reduced by the extravagance and profligacy of her husband.

May 2.—Breakfasted at Coblenz, which my father found very much changed since he had last visited it in 1791, when it was the rendezvous of all the young and chivalrous French emigrants collected round Louis XVIII. and his brother. Amongst other changes the Elector's Palace, where Monsieur held his court, was now used as a stable.

As we approached Liége we observed signs and tokens of war; Prussian troops stationed at equal distances, and other appearances of military discipline, which reminded us that this day had been fixed by Marshal Blücher for the execution of the ringleaders of a rebellion in a Saxon regiment; this circumstance added to the natural gloom of Liége and made us anxious to leave it. Whilst we remained within its walls, I could not help fancying that I heard the shots which were depriving so many families of their only support, and sending so many of my fellow-creatures into eternity. Sir Henry Hardinge called upon my father—he was then employed under Blücher. Several waggons laden with Saxon prisoners passed us on their way to S. Tron, where many others were already confined; nothing could exceed the hatred which seemed to exist between the prisoners and their guards, their very countenances betrayed it.

On our arrival at Brussels we found the city in a delightful state of bustle and animation. I am wicked enough to use that ill-applied word, because at the time I speak of confusion, excitement, and bustle were *delightful* to my thoughtless mind. If I could have foreseen how soon many of the gallant soldiers we met at Brussels would be called into action, and how few comparatively would survive the day of Waterloo, I hope I might have felt differently as I gazed on the animated and brilliant scene. Every hotel was so crowded that we were obliged to engage a private lodging in the Rue de Luxum, where my father was soon visited by his large military acquaintance—Sir James Lyon and Sir James Colleton were of the number. Our Spanish guest, General Alava, now ambassador to the Netherlands, invited us to dinner, but my father declined. We spent our evenings chiefly in the Park, which was indeed a gay and brilliant scene; many a young hero was there full of joyful anticipations of glory never to be realized for him on earth.

We embarked at Ostend with our friends, General and Mrs. F. The last words we heard on the shore were those of a poor Highland soldier who had assisted in pushing off the vessel. 'May God bless ye, ladies, and speed ye safe to dear auld England,' said the poor fellow, whose heart was at the moment fixed on the remembrance of that home he was perhaps never permitted to revisit.

At two o'clock the following day we landed in England. To me it was as a strange country, for I had left it as a mere child, and I now returned after an absence of nearly four years. I was of a very sociable temperament, and not having yet passed the age of romantic friendship, I was of

course ready to fall in love with every girl of my own age whom I met. I tried very hard to persuade myself that the accomplished granddaughters of my old friend were exactly the description of young ladies whom I wished to find. They were older than myself, they looked very sedate, they played on every instrument and spoke every language, but above all they were so timid, so feminine, so retiring! Alas, before many years had elapsed—but *not*, I am thankful to say, before I discovered my mistake—one of them had eloped with a foreigner, and the other with somebody else.

My father left us with my governess, Miss S., at Stowey for a few days, during which we accompanied my godfather on a visit to his neighbour Hannah More. I scarcely remember any particulars of her conversation during that visit, but I have often listened to her in after years with a great degree of interest. On this occasion I know that I felt dreadfully frightened, and that I expected to see a very stiff, pedantic kind of person, instead of which she proved to be a lively, animated little old lady, her eyes sparkling with good-humour, and her whole countenance expressing benevolence. I can just remember her mentioning an anecdote respecting 'Coelebs' which seemed to afford some amusement. Some friend of hers, I believe, had overheard the following dialogue between two Oxford students:—'Well, have you read "Coelebs in search of a wife?"' 'Yes.' 'What do you think of it.' 'Think! why, I think he's a great bore.' 'There's a monstrous deal of skip in it, but that fellow Coelebs *has* one good quality—he drives a curricule.'

Hannah More's family consisted of herself and her two maiden sisters, both of whom were her inferiors in point of talent and manner; but I believe they were excellent women, and the little trio was one of peace and harmony. Hannah More must indeed have been more than mortal if her natural vanity had not increased by the atmosphere of flattery in which she lived. The good, the great people of all ages—of all opinions, I had almost said, but certainly all who valued either religious principle or talent—offered their little tribute of respect and admiration to a woman who certainly has done more than any female writer of her age towards raising the standard of female education. In one of her letters, written about the time we saw her, she says: 'I never saw more people, known and unknown, in my gayest days; they come to me as to the Witch of Endor, and I suppose I shall soon be desired to tell fortunes and cast nativities.' Now, it so happens that in these my very youthful days I *did* look upon Hannah More as upon a kind of supernatural old lady of whom I should very gladly have asked my fortune. I was much relieved by the simple, kind, and encouraging manner in which she inquired into my studies, pursuits, &c. She was at that time still able to exert herself, and insisted upon showing us over the grounds of her pretty cottage. We saw a little monument which she had raised in her shrubbery to the memory of Bishop Porteus, and another to that of Locke, who was born in the adjoining village.

In August my father went to Paris, for the purpose of having an interview with the Duke of Wellington, and returned to England on the 20th.

On the 3rd September we embarked at Milford for Waterford. Steam packets were not yet established, but we had a short and pleasant voyage. The misery and desolation of poor Ireland did not of course strike me as forcibly in 1815 as it has done in after years. The scenes which I had witnessed in Portugal, ruined villages and ragged peasantry, were still fresh in my remembrance. Near Macroom we stopped to look at one of the old round towers which are so common throughout Ireland, and which we were told by some ragged peasants was haunted by a 'Banshee,' an evil spirit who appeared every night in the form of a beautiful young lady surrounded by flames of fire. We asked one of the poor women if she had ever seen her? 'Och hone, my dharling, is it myself would be after looking?' Near this spot we had a fair specimen of the *comfort* of the lower classes in my unhappy country: a cabin containing a mother and five children, literally nothing but the walls, not even a roof! We visited Muckross Abbey, a most beautiful ruin situated on the property of Mr. Herbert; within a few years it had been inhabited by a hermit, who excited very general interest by the austerities which he was *supposed* to practise, and by the dreadful penances he had inflicted on himself of sleeping in the roofless cloisters upon the planks of an ancient coffin. The poor people were beginning to doubt whether he should be canonized as a saint after his death, or whether he should be exorcised as an evil spirit, when it was discovered that he acquired all his courage from drinking brandy, and he was exiled from the abbey as a vagabond.

In January (1815) I was sent under the escort of Mr. and Mrs. S. to Limerick, from whence I was to go to Desboro' Hall, and there to await my uncle's arrival; at Limerick, however, I received a kind letter from Mrs. B., telling me that the embarrassed state of Mr. B.'s affairs obliged them to leave Desboro' and proceed without delay to Llanryn Abbey in Wales. This was indeed a disappointment: I did not like my travelling companions, and they probably thought me a bore, but what was to be done? I could not be left alone in the wide world of Ireland, and accordingly I accompanied them to Dublin. And such a week as I passed there! with such specimens of the most vulgar class of Irish society! My host was a rich old attorney. I dare not trust my pen to describe the family circle or the daily conversation; indeed, I hope I should now be puzzled to remember it, but I know that I became every hour more impatient to join my father, and that I hailed with joy the stormy night when we embarked on board the packet for Holyhead. One of my fellow-passengers in the ladies' cabin was exceedingly kind to me, and her manners were so pleasing and benevolent that I of course thought her a most delightful person—a valuable friend in embryo; what was my disappointment at hearing from my uncle that Lady E. F. was not

even a respectable person—that she was very different from all that I had pictured her to my sanguine imagination. I mention this because it was one of the first chills of feeling that I ever experienced.

On July 11th, at six o'clock in the evening, we set off for Paris, where my father and uncle had agreed I should accompany them, to be present at the marriage of the Duc de Berri to the young Princess, Marie Caroline des Deux Siciles.

We had not been many hours in Paris before I received a visit from a French lady, with whom my father and mother had been acquainted in 1802. She announced her intention of returning the following morning with Mdlle. Alphonsine, her milliner, for the purpose of effecting a complete reform in my wardrobe, which she kindly assured me was *affreux*, *épouvantable*, and unworthy of a young lady of fifteen. I was a little affronted at the uncereemonious manner in which my white muslin frocks, which I had fancied exceedingly fine, were first ridiculed and then condemned by the fastidious taste of Madame P. and Mdlle. A., but I very soon became ashamed of my *tournure Anglaise*, and took every possible pains to look like a well-dressed, conceited little Parisian girl!

I must not attempt to describe the unwholesome effect of Paris dissipation upon my very young mind. I thank God that it soon subsided, and that I very soon became fatigued with the life of excitement and amusement, which at first seemed so pleasant that I thought it never could weary me. We certainly saw Paris at a most brilliant moment. The short-lived enthusiasm of the volatile Parisians for the unhappy race of Bourbon was then at its height; even religion, or at least a conformity to the rites of the Roman Catholic Church, was at that time the feeling of the majority; refinement of manners, if not of mind, had returned with the *ancien régime*, and it was impossible not to look with feelings of respect on the grey-haired emigrant nobles who now surrounded the royal family, when one remembered that they at least of the French nation had shown the most faithful and romantic attachment to their sovereign in his days of adversity; and the names of Duras, Mortemart, de Coigny, &c., sounded very chivalrous after the plebeian names of Bonaparte's guard-room Court.

From our apartments, No. 20, Boulevard des Italiens, we had a very good view of the entrance of the young Duchesse de Berri, who had been received at Fontainebleau by her betrothed husband and the royal family. Triumphant arches covered with festoons of flowers were erected in different parts of Paris; the streets were lined with troops and crowded with an immense concourse of people; all Paris was in motion: white flags were suspended at every window, and the cyphers of Marie Caroline and Charles Ferdinand were united by wreaths of laurel and fleur de lys. A detachment of Gardes du Corps preceded the royal carriage, an open barouche, which passed slowly along the Boulevards in order to allow the Parisians the privilege of staring, and the young bride the extreme pleasure of being stared at. If ever royalty appears to disadvantage, and

royal brides appear unenviable, it is on such occasions as these. The poor young princess, who was now for the first time introduced to her new relations, and seated by the side of the Duc de Berri, whom she had never seen, was at this time seventeen years old; her features were irregular, and only remarkable for their extreme paleness; in fact, if she had not been a princess she would have been voted very ugly; but such was the royalist mania in Paris, that to be like even a very ugly duchess was considered rather an enviable distinction, and I was more than once congratulated by some of my partners upon my singular and striking resemblance to Madame la Duchesse de Berri. I hope the resemblance did not extend further than our pug-noses and wide mouths. The poor Duchesse of Angoulême, and the fat old Louis XVIII., occupied the other seats in the *calèche*. The young bride elect wore no covering either on her head or neck, but sat pale and motionless as a statue, exposed to the scorching rays of a July sun and to the rude gaze of a Parisian mob.

My father having obtained tickets at the British Embassy of admission to Nôtre Dame (June 17, 1816), we were present at the brilliant scene of the royal nuptials. The magnificent old church was beautifully decorated with flowers, and the choir was composed of some of the finest vocal and instrumental performers in Europe. The king entered in his ungraceful manner, and hobbled, as fast as his size and weight would permit, to the throne, around which were summoned the princes of the royal family, the marshals of France, and the Corps Diplomatique. The Duke of Wellington and his staff were likewise present. The Duc de Berri was dressed in a magnificent costume of white satin and gold, à la *Henri Quatre* (if anyone present had been gifted with second sight, and could have foretold his miserable end!) The Duchesse d'Angoulême was dressed in white and green, her favourite mixture, intended to indicate Hope and Innocence; on this occasion even her melancholy and forbidding countenance, which could in general but ill conceal the contempt in which she could scarcely fail to hold the acclamations of a Parisian mob, had assumed a cheerful expression, and she returned every salutation with more than her usual cordiality. The Duchesse Douairière d'Orléans, who was celebrated during the reign of Louis XVI. as the most virtuous woman at the Court of Versailles, although she was united to the most worthless of men (the wretched *Egalité*), and the Duchesse de Bourbon, mother of the unfortunate Duc d'Enghien, followed the Duchesse d'Angoulême. The venerable Prince de Condé and his son the Duc de Bourbon were also present. On the whole it was a very interesting scene, and I returned to the hotel fatigued with the excess of pleasure and excitement, but still able to watch my father's countenance with intense anxiety when I saw him unfold a card of invitation from the Duke of Wellington, which awaited our arrival at the hotel.

Was I included—and if I was, would my father indeed allow me to go?—and if he did, how could I manage to procure a suitable ball dress for the evening? considering that the extent of my finery consisted in a

white muslin frock, which my Parisian lady acquaintance, Madame P., and her satellite Mdlle. Alphonsine, the milliner, had already declared to be '*une horreur !*'

By dint of their management and extravagance even this difficulty was overcome, and with a beating heart I ascended—leaning on my father's arm—the brilliantly illuminated staircase which conducted us to the presence of the Hero of Waterloo. It was indeed a very magnificent scene; all the ladies who had been paying their respects to the young Duchesse de Berri were in court dresses, all the gentlemen in brilliant uniforms; but after gazing at the 'galaxy of beauty,' as the newspapers would call it, and the assemblage of heroes for half an hour, shall I acknowledge that I felt tired and sleepy, and that my little vain heart began to whisper that all this was very fine, but very stupid and wearisome, because nobody had the discrimination to find out my agreeable qualities. Nobody took the slightest notice of me, except a few old military friends of my father's—nobody asked me to dance! How easy it is to blind ourselves as to our own motives, both of thought and action. I returned home and fell asleep, thinking myself 'very clever' for having found out the vanity of balls and the weariness of gaiety; whereas if I had had many partners or heard many civil speeches, I should have been more than ever confirmed in my opinion that dancing was a most rational amusement—late hours most improving to health—and the civil speeches of the French officers in brilliant uniforms equally improving to the understanding of a silly little girl of fifteen!

THE CHARLEMAGNE ROMANCES.

BOIARDO.

THE contrasting beauty of Marfisa and Angelica is here charmingly described, as each riding beside her knight, who, with a stately gallantry, holds her by the hand, they appear upon the place of combat. The strong queen is without her helmet, with her fair tresses coiled round her stately head: she is tall in stature, and somewhat dark in complexion, with 'eyes like stars,' and a bold yet graceful bearing. But Angelica is 'tender and delicate,' with soft, fair face, and rosy lips, and eyes under whose glance even the haughtiest heart becomes soft and gentle, and her manner and speech are so winning and gracious that every 'sad thought turns gay' in her presence.

Once more the cousins engaged, for Rinaldo was now as angry as Orlando; and Orlando was so obstinate in wrong that, though 'he knew he was committing a great sin in going thus against a brother, yet he banished reason and persuaded himself that love would have it so.' The battle was even fiercer than that of the previous day. At last Rinaldo was struck, though fortunately with the flat of Durlindana, with such violence that he was perfectly stunned, and the blood gushed from his mouth. Seeing this Angelica could bear no more. As Orlando raised

his sword to kill his now defenceless cousin, she seized his hand, and with feigned smiles, told him that now had come the moment at which she had determined to make a long-deferred petition to him, and this was that he should prove his love to her yet further by setting off instantly for Orgagna to destroy the garden of the evil fairy, Fallerina.

Bowing reverently, and with no demur as to the inconsequence of such a request at such a moment, Orlando obeys his lady's sovereign behest, and departs instantly upon his wild mission, leaving Rinaldo to rage in vain on recovering his senses.

The knight sped rapidly on his way till the sight of a damsel suspended by her hair, and swinging, 'light as a leaf in the wind,' checked his course. She deserved her punishment, for she was false and cruel; but to behold a woman suffer was always more than Orlando could bear, so he freed her, and mounted her behind him. But the treacherous Origilla soon played her deliverer a sordid trick. Her vanity was irritated at his silence and preoccupation, and to revenge herself, she told him that if he would mount the steps of an edifice they were passing and look down its centre, he would behold heaven and hell. The simple knight accordingly dismounted to see this great sight. 'Now God speed you, Sir Knight,' cried the cunning Origilla, 'I know not whether you are accustomed to go on foot, but I must leave you!' So saying she put Brigliador to a gallop, leaving Orlando to read at his leisure the legend that this was the tomb of Ninus, and then to plod onward, with his spurs in his hand, whilst he anathematized the perfidy of women and his own credulity for listening to them. But he had not travelled many days in this tedious fashion when he came upon a troop of men leading three prisoners to be food for Fallerina's serpent. Two of these prisoners were Aquilante and Grifone, the third was Origilla upon Brigliador. Orlando hastened to deliver them all, and kindly-natured as he was, and right glad to recover Brigliador, he received Origilla's terrified but false protestations of penitence with a 'heartly kiss' of forgiveness. But that night the traitress betrayed him afresh, for angry at Orlando's loud snoring, and wishing to overtake Grifone, to whom she had taken a fancy, she stole Durlindana from the knight's side and thought to kill him with it, but he looked so terribly grand in his sleep that she, cowardly in her wickedness, was afraid to touch him. So she made off silently with the sword and Brigliador, leaving him defenceless on the eve of a perilous undertaking, for he had now reached the great wall of Fallerina's garden, and only awaited the dawn to face all its terrors. But fortunately, though without his trusty Durlindana, he was not without a knowledge of the dangers he would have to encounter. For a friendly damsel, named Prudence, whom he had met the day before, had prepared him by careful instruction and wise counsel for his arduous undertaking, and taught him how he should compass the destruction of all the evil spells of this terrible place. She had also forewarned him that Fallerina, knowing by her power of divination that he was fated to destroy her

stronghold, had been long busy fashioning a sword keen enough to cut through all enchantment, for the express purpose of his destruction.

When Orlando, pursuant to his instructions, awaked at dawn and rose to be ready for his attack precisely at sun-rise, he discovered his loss; but he was not the man to be deterred from an enterprise by the mere want of a weapon, for upon his bold nature difficulty only acted as an incentive. Breaking down a great bough from a tree therefore, he attacked the serpent with it and, though with great difficulty, killed it. But the gate disappeared with the death of its guardian, and left him apparently no further advanced in his enterprise. However, he found his way to the fairy's palace—a gorgeous fabric of marble and gold. The door was not locked, and the knight entering, discovered Fallerina herself, clad in white and crowned with gold, looking at herself in the polished surface of a sword she held in her hand. But she did not attempt to turn the deadly weapon upon the daring intruder. She felt that 'her doom had come upon her,' and fled at sight of him; but he pursued and bound her, and took her sword; and then, aided by the book furnished by the gentle counsellor of yesterday, destroyed the fiery-horned bull, the monstrous ass, the multiplying giant, the foul bird, and the syren which guarded the garden, by all of which we are to understand the vices to which men are most prone; and finally, with the sword which was to have destroyed himself, cut down the tree with golden apples which formed the key-stone of the whole enchantment. The garden vanished amidst thunder, earthquake, and smoke, whilst Fallerina humbled herself to entreat his mercy, and offered to release her prisoners; and the good knight, who was always gentle to women, travelled on amicably with her for this purpose.

At Albracca the face of affairs had changed in the interval. Having destroyed Truffaldino, and not sympathizing in Marfisa's desire for the death of Angelica, whom he simply detested as a woman, Rinaldo determined to follow Orlando for the purpose of pursuing his quarrel with him. But first he rejects Angelica's attempt to propitiate him by sending him Baiardo in charge of one of her damsels, turns his back upon the messenger and refuses to hear her message; precious as was the gift, he would not accept it at those hated hands, and Astolfo alone prevented the horse from being sent back.

Rinaldo and his companions now set out on their journey, but before they had gone very far they were entrapped into the power of the fairy Morgana, who was furious at the scorn manifested by Orlando for her proffers, and who had laid a snare for him into which many others fell, decoyed by a miscreant named Arridan, who flying to the edge of a lake, then turned, and seizing his unwary pursuer, sprang into the water and sank with him.

A heavy calamity was meanwhile threatening France. The African king Agramant, the son of Troian,* having set his mind on revenging the

* Brother of Almonte, and also killed by Orlando in the last invasion.

death of his father, assembled a great council of kings to lay his purpose before them. The aged king of Garamanta in vain foretold that this expedition would prove the ruin of Agramant's kingdom; his prophecies were regarded as the babblings of old age; and the fierce and impious Rodamont, king of Sarza,* openly scoffed at him. The old soothsayer then entreated that, since his counsels were rejected, a certain youth who was concealed in the heart of the desert on the mountain of Carena might be sought, for he alone could prevent the total destruction of Agramant and his army. This youth, whose name was Ruggiero and who was the son of Ruggiero of Risa (a paladin slain by Almonte), was now carefully concealed by his guardian, a powerful magician named Atlante, who knowing by the stars that his charge was destined, like his father, to meet an untimely death by treacherous hands, and loving him like his own life, exerted his utmost art to endeavour to ward off this danger from his pupil. But in vain did the emissaries of Agramant seek Ruggiero; the mountain of Carena had been thoroughly explored without result, and scoffing Rodamont afresh mocked the soothsayer; but the old prophet reiterated his assertions with calm dignity, adding, however, that the enchantment of Atlante could not be destroyed till a certain ring now in the possession of Angelica should be procured. In order to obtain this ring, a thief so dexterous in his profession that he could steal 'the sound from the water, and the song from the birds,' was found and despatched on his mission.

This little thief Brunello is an exceedingly amusing personage. But we must not stay to describe him. He fulfils his mission without delay, stealing the ring from Angelica's finger in broad daylight, as she stands on the wall of the castle looking on at the combat between Marfisa and Sacripant (now Angelica's sole defender). She would not have perceived her loss but for the impudence of the thief who chose that she should see him. She was in despair on discovering that her ring was gone, but pursuit was useless, Brunel had slipped over the wall, through the fosse and into the river before the pursuers could reach the gate. He was supposed to be drowned, but far from it, he was amusing himself with observing the champions. Sacripant was no match for Marfisa in strength, but his courser, Frontalatte, was light as a bird, and flew round the angry queen whilst she discharged her ponderous blows on empty air. Both warriors were now seeking to breathe their horses, and Sacripant had fallen into a deep and sorrowful reverie, for he had heard that his kingdom of Circassia had been taken, and his brother slain by a treacherous enemy. His abstraction puts a quaint idea into the little rogue's head; he takes a pole, and inserting it gently between the saddle and Frontalatte's back, by degrees lowers the Circassian king to the ground. Then, whilst Sacripant stares stupefied, himself springs upon the horse's back and darts away. Marfisa, seeing this feat, is too astounded to speak, but remains looking on in dumb amaze: whereupon the merry rascal snatches her sword as he

* A direct descendant of Nimrod, wearing his armour and inheriting his impiety.

passes, and flies laughing, leaving her, foaming with rage, to follow if she pleases.

Orlando must now be followed to the rescue of Rinaldo. Arriving with Fallerina upon the borders of Morgana's newly-prepared lake, they perceived the wretch Arridan waiting to decoy passengers. Fallerina warned her companion of this fresh danger, and told him that it was for the express purpose of his capture that the enraged fairy had made this cunning snare. But the fearless knight, though he might have turned from it as a needless peril, yet faced it without hesitation when he remarked the arms of Rinaldo hung up beside the lake as a trophy. Instantly feeling all the affection of the better days of old rush back upon his heart and flood his eyes, 'O my cousin,' he cried, 'hear me from thy place in Paradise, hear me who loved thee ever; forgive me my sin against thee! it was not the sin of a sane man: I was ever thine and still am thine; though false suspicion and vain love came between us, I loved thee always as I love thee now.'

He then drew his sword to avenge his cousin's death. After some fighting, Arridan appeared, as usual, to fly, but turning at the brink of the lake, caught Orlando in his arms and sprang with him into the water. But the good knight retained his presence of mind, and killed Arridan at the bottom of the lake. He now found himself in a meadow with the crystal bottom of the lake above illumined by our sun. He found a passage through the crystalline walls which surrounded him, and pursued a long, dark and devious subterranean road till he came to a river with an iron figure guarding the slender bridge across it. As the paladin set his foot on this bridge the figure raised his club and destroyed the slight fabric at a blow. This being repeated, Orlando cut the matter short by leaping the stream. On the other side he saw a king and his council all of gold,* seated at a golden table, with golden viands before them. Over the king's head was suspended a sword, and on each side stood a figure, one with bent bow, the other holding a legend, that, 'Riches possessed with fear, are not worth possession.' The place was lighted by a great carbuncle, which shone like the sun, in the heart of a golden lily. Orlando looked, much marvelling at this golden company, but wishing to continue his journey, and finding all dark beyond the sphere of the carbuncle's rays, he returned to take the precious stone to light him; but as he touched it, the figure with the bow discharged his arrow at the carbuncle, and all was darkness, earthquake and thunder. Orlando waited calmly till the commotion was over; then repeated his attempt, but with the same result, and a more terrible earthquake. The third time, grown wiser, he received the arrow on his shield, then, unhindered, took the luminous jewel and went his way. When he issued from the long vaulted passage he found himself in a charming garden, and beheld a fair damsel who lay sleeping beside a fountain. Whilst he stopped gazing upon this pleasant sight, he heard a voice bidding him seize the sleeper by the hair on her forehead; but

* A similar story is given in a mediæval work called, 'Gesta Romanorum.'

instead of taking the advice he turned to see whence the voice proceeded. He beheld a crystal wall, and behind it Dudone (the son of Uggiero the Dane) Rinaldo, Brandimart, and various others. His first impulse was to break through the transparent boundary which separated him from such dear friends, but they all cried urgently to him to desist, for with the breaking of the wall they must be precipitated into an abyss. They bade him hasten back and seize Morgana by the forelock, for this was the only method by which she might be compelled to give up her keys.

But the unwary paladin had let slip the golden opportunity, and it could not be regained. He returned indeed to the fountain, but the fickle fairy was now singing and dancing. She fled as he approached, and led him a terrible chase over rock, stone and briar, through hail and storm and blustering wind, whilst to make matters worse, the gaunt hag 'Repentance,' left her cave to follow in his steps and belabour him incessantly with her scourge. But fortune may be retrieved: the inexhaustible perseverance of the paladin at last prevailed, he seized Morgana's hair as she turned her head and compelled her to return with him and set the captives free. Morgana, however, begged so urgently that of these prisoners, one whom she tenderly loved—Ziliante the fair, son of Monodant, king of the Distant Isles—might be left to her, that Orlando relented and allowed her to retain the youth; a weakness which he afterwards bitterly regretted, for he was obliged to return and fetch him.

And now the paladin leads his rescued friends back to the upper world. As they passed the golden company Rinaldo alone yielded to the temptation of avarice; he took up a chair of gold and carried it off despite Orlando's warning; but when they reached the exit, though Orlando and the others passed freely, a strong wind blew back the treasure-laden knight; and it was only after many vain efforts to pass, which excited the fears of his friends lest he should sacrifice his freedom to his cupidity, that he consented to relinquish his booty, and pass out from this great treasure-house of the whole world empty-handed like the rest.

Once more in the free air, Dudone told the mission which had brought him to seek the wandering paladins. France was in danger and Carlo required their presence. Rinaldo immediately prepared to accompany the messenger, but Orlando experienced a terrible struggle between love and duty. His fatal passion at last prevailed, so that 'he forgot almost even his God,' and he determined to return to Angelica. Brandimart, who loved him so faithfully that he could not bear to leave him, wrong as he was, accompanied him. During their journey on foot they came upon Marfisa in hot pursuit of Brunello, who, from time to time, letting her nearly catch him, snapped his fingers in her face, and fled again. Seeing Orlando stand laughing at this strange sight, the dexterous thief snatched the sword of Fallerina and the great Almonte-horn from his side as he passed, leaving the vexed paladin once more weaponless.

But he and his cousin were destined to meet more quickly than they

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anticipated, for they were both decoyed into the hands of the king of the Distant Isles, who with the view of inducing Morgana to give up his son Ziliante, had promised to put Orlando into her hands ; and, in order to do this, artfully entrapped all passengers at a river which it was necessary to cross. Orlando, on his part was, this time unintentionally, led into the snare by Origilla, whom he saw on the other side of this river in great distress at finding that she, with Aquilant and Grifone, who had also arrived there were in fact, prisoners. Determined to recover his sword and horse, Orlando instantly crossed over to her, but, with his accustomed soft-heartedness where women were concerned, forgave the traitress once more. But though he had recovered Brigliador and Durlindana, he had himself fallen into a trap. He, like Rinaldo, Dudone and many others, was decoyed by Monodant's Protean magician, into a ship and fettered. But Brandimart, leaping on board as Orlando disappeared, rescued him, and killed the magician. Learning from the crew the purpose of the equipment, and that Rinaldo and Astolfo were already prisoners, the two friends resolved to go to their rescue ; but Orlando carefully concealed his name. However, he was once more betrayed by Origilla, who, on condition that Grifone should be delivered up to her, informed Monodant that the object of his wishes was now in his power. In consequence of her representations of Orlando's great strength, he and Brandimart were taken in their beds and thrown into a dungeon.

Here both considered themselves lost, but Brandimart hearing Orlando pray, desired that he would explain to him a faith which could uphold him, and render him cheerful and serene even under such desperate circumstances. Thus predisposed both by his affection and his observation, Brandimart speedily became a convert to Christianity.

He now proposed a plan to Orlando by which the latter's life at least might be saved. His suggestion was, that he should answer to the name of Orlando, and that he should represent to king Monodant that his friend Brandimart had already delivered certain captives from the hands of Morgana, and that, if he were allowed to depart he would certainly compel her to give up the young prince Ziliante. To this the paladin reluctantly consented as offering the sole chance of escape for either. The plan succeeded, and Orlando was allowed to depart, whilst Brandimart remained, in his character, as a hostage in the hands of King Monodant.

But Astolfo, unfortunately, acted the part of a marplot in the matter, for, hearing that his cousin Orlando was there, he begged urgently to be allowed to see him. Brandimart, in much alarm, allowed that he had once known 'a kind of buffoon named Astolfo,' and the king immediately sent for the duke to amuse the company !

Of course on being brought into the presence of the supposed Orlando, who, as the messenger told him, had called him a 'buffoon,' Astolfo was too irate to think of consequences ; he loudly asserted that Brandimart was an impostor, and only remembered he should have been prudent when the latter was once more ignominiously thrown back into his dungeon.

WOMANKIND.

CHAPTER XIX.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

SISTERS and brothers work on each other in different ways, but very important ones. It depends partly on nursery management, partly on disposition, whether the elder brother starts as the tyrant and tormentor or the champion and spoiler, or whether the elder sister is the little mother or the noisy, disregarded opposer, or whether the two children nearly of an age are allies or wranglers.

Temper has much to do with it. Boys have generally far more of the animal than the knight about them before they are twelve years old, and their instinct is to feel their power by exercising it on the weak, so that a whining, fretful girl seems to them fair play. The male creature almost always requires to have some pretty return for his kindness, and a little sister who has not the grace to 'purr when she is pleased,' and cannot be amusing, has not much chance of tenderness from an elder brother; nor is he always sensible of charms in her that delight other people, but thinks her 'a little humbug,' and feels it a sort of duty to pay her off in private for the social success he thinks undeserved.

After all this does not make much difference in the after relations between them, when the one is more manly, and the other has more self-command: it only spoils the recollections of childhood.

There is sure to be a butt in every lively family on which the others expend their shafts of wit. The qualifications for it are various. Sometimes stupidity is the cause of it, but it quite as often happens that the cleverest and most intellectual of the family takes that post. A certain simplicity or absence of mind, especially coupled with good humour, are the chief qualities in such a target, who is always giving occasion for those family jokes and anecdotes so delightful at home. And if the said butt is not only passive, but reflective, and can laugh at itself, and can return the raillery, it becomes a charming institution, and is often the best loved of all, sure to be mentioned with the fond prefix of 'old,' or 'poor.'

A girl is generally the butt, for though brothers and sisters both laugh at sisters, and brothers use their brothers for the purpose, the sister very seldom does so; she has far too much respectful love. If her brother is dull, she is too tender and too much grieved to joke about it, and will feel his failures far too deeply to tease him about them. In fact, she is often his guardian spirit, shielding him—if she be the pet—learning his lesson, and longing to impart to him her own faculty of understanding.

In a family where the sexes are mixed with tolerable equality, all the middle ones find their level according to their powers, and only the

eldest and youngest have any special prerogatives of position. The eldest, if a girl, is bound to be helpful and motherly, to be domestic vizier almost as soon as she can speak, and to be an authority in the nursery—her mother's *confidante* and right hand. Often she is much of all this, but therewith come the many trials of the lot. She has to keep order before she has weight to do so, and when her endeavours to be impressive are received with derision, and peace can only be preserved by sacrifices of her own property. Very little time is left her for her own pleasures and pursuits, and she often has more than half the cares of the family thrown on her. There must always be some one person in a house to whose lot fall the 'must be dones,' and this is nearly sure to be, if not mamma, the eldest or the second daughter. If the eldest does not take this post, she is nearly sure to be a self-asserting, selfish girl, taking the advantages of her situation without attending to its claims (unless, indeed, health have set her aside). At the same time the helpful girl must not be bustling, rough, or domineering, or her usefulness becomes disagreeable. Unobtrusiveness must accompany her readiness, or she will be officious; and when she has the gift of keeping order, she must exercise it with *real* kindness, or she will lose the love and confidence of the younger ones. A hearty, good-humoured way of putting down a row will do no harm, while 'nagging' or airs of superiority alienate. Never lose your temper, and always be ready to be laughed at, or to help; and tolerate whatever is only trying to yourself. If you can do this, you will not be wasting your strength for opposing what ought not to be tolerated, either as flat disobedience to authorities, moral wrong in itself, or as cruel and distressing to invalids, little ones, servants, or animals. Never give way to what is absolutely wrong, but stretch your endurance and sympathy to the utmost rather than lose your brother's heart. And when your power of arresting mischief snaps, the old Horatian rule of not being too lavish of the *Deus ex machina* applies to appeals to parents. Never say that if such a thing is done, you will tell, if you ever let yourself be teased, bullied, or worked upon not to perform your threat. Your word *must* be kept, however dreadful to yourself and the victims, and the misery of the thing will hinder you from giving it lightly.

A sister can do much to keep her brother within bounds if she has his thorough love and trust, and can sympathize with him heartily, ministering to all his innocent pleasures as his willing slave, but standing resolute if there be a spice of evil in them. Never should she favour any disobedience, or connive at anything dishonourable towards her parents; it is doing nothing but harm. Yet it is mischievous as well as hateful to be tale-bearer as to every escapade of a holiday school-boy, and the right medium seems to be to abstain from all participation in or profit through the escapade, to protest against it, and though not volunteering information, to refuse concealment in case of interrogation, because of the impossibility of a falsehood. To keep up a standard of real honour, above school-boy honour, is most needful.

In fact, brothers and sisters are designed to help one another. The boy, with his greater and wider experience, and deeper and more thorough way of studying, and manly common sense, is able to see through the sister's little enthusiasms, and to put them to that severe trial, 'ridicule, the test of truth.' Often it will not be done gently, but it is a very useful crucible. Boys are apt to be jealous of anything that engrosses their sisters to the exclusion of their lordly selves, and to have a strong love of teasing, which inspires banter after they have grown too old for the bodily tortures to which they put their little sisters.

In boyhood, the Tartar is apt to be near the surface without any scratching, and the girl, if sound in health and spirits, can stand it, and thus earn for herself power of endurance, and a certain respect and confidence even from the bullying brother. Not that I am advocating bullying. Parents and authorities should denounce and punish it sternly as cruel and cowardly ; but where it is not preventible, I am only trying to show the victims how to make the best of it by good-humoured endurance. If they complain on their own account, their influence is lost ; if they endure, there is every hope for them when their tyrant grows into a reasonable being, and for savagery substitutes a certain stern chivalry, insisting on his sister's coming up to his idea of the perfect lady, and generally it is a very reasonable one. He wants to be proud of his sister, and, though liking her to be 'up to everything' in courage or dexterity, is resolved that it shall be all in a ladylike way, and is determined to have her refined and well dressed. His criticisms in this way are generally very useful ; in fact, whatever nonsenses he may have of his own, he is very clear-sighted as to her nonsenses. Sometimes he is wrong, as when he resents devotional exercises, self-denials, or charities. They had better not be obtruded on him ; and a non-essential should be good-naturedly given up to him—*i.e.*, a Communion or a Sunday morning service, never ; but a week-day attendance often had better be left undone rather than not be with him in some amusement, which respect for his sister will render innocent ; and even on a Sunday afternoon or evening, it seems to me that when he *will* not be brought to church, and asks his sister to walk with him or sing to him, she will be better employed in giving him her presence and sympathy than in going to church and leaving him to the thoughtless companions whom her presence will keep aloof.

When she is taking mere activity and occupation in religious matters for real religion, he will often, while shocking her by dislike to these doings, be far deeper and more real in his feelings than herself. Very likely, though he goes to fewer services, and likes them much less than she does, it is because he pays a much stronger and more real attention to them, and has a deeper reverence, which, while it is fretted by her gestures, which shock his reserve and seem absurd to him, will not permit him to be present at what he feels he cannot attend or respond to with all his soul. He is more thorough than she from his training.

Not for a moment would I acquiesce in the sort of understanding prevalent on the Continent and in some English families, that the women are the religious part of the community, who have to push, pull, and drag their mankind into as much as they will endure for *their* sakes. No, indeed. Ever since the world began the man has been called on to serve God, and no woman should voluntarily enter a house without a religious man at the head of it; and, if born in such a house, her prayers, her example, and her efforts should never cease to endeavour to win those connected with her to God. I am rather thinking of those homes where the boys and girls have been trained together till school-days, and in their after-times, when on the bounds of youth, the religious habits which are second nature to the girls, seem irksome to the creatures in whom the animal spirits are wilder, and who are impatient alike of restraint or unreality.

Unreality; yes, that is the point. What is humbug and self-deceit in you, the brother will detect, even though it be perfectly unconscious on your own part. If your righteousness have anything of the Pharisee in it, if it is outward ritual alone, without good temper, kindness, dutifulness, and perfect truth, he will see it, and think your faults the faults of your profession. Whereas—though even you be far from perfect—if he perceives that your religious feelings are sincere in making you struggle with your faults, and that they tell on your whole family conduct, then he will respect them and you, and be far more likely to share them, and to adopt your standard of right.

And a high-minded good brother is an unspeakable blessing. Often education throws the men of a family under religious influences far superior to what the girls meet at home. They may meet at school, the University, or in London, with the leading spirits of the Church, and the training of their parents at home may be carried on by more deep and far-reaching instruction. Then their sisters have nothing to do but gladly to reap the benefit of their guidance.

‘ Or if before thee in the race
Urge him with thine advancing tread ’

may be said to them, and the fraternal bond becomes infinitely more close and precious. There is sympathy and help on both sides, and the two draw one another upwards, and work together, share their books and thoughts, and have one hope. Then the sister can throw herself into her brother's projects, and have her mind opened to far more than left to herself she would ever have thought of.

These are the truly happy families; such affections are the really deep ones. Natural love goes far; and even for an unworthy brother many a good girl will feel intense affection, helping him with his lessons, shielding him in his scrapes, and sometimes sacrificing her whole life to him. How many maidservants and governesses have some horseleech brother, who consumes their savings, and often, when dissipation has ended his days,

his children remain to be their charge, I will not say their drag, for often requital and comfort come from them. If self-sacrifice were really a misfortune, the spectacle would be a sad one, but happily it is the glory of their lives. And as long as a man can believe in a good woman, mother, wife, or sister, a cord is near for pulling him out of the mire.

The trial of the sister's love is that in the course of nature ; it does not remain the prime love of the entire life. It is everything till youth sets in, and then it is set aside for other loves, and the sister has to take an inferior place ; yes, and acquiesce and sympathise when her heart is sore at sense of neglect, and she is tempted to be most jealous and most critical, and cannot believe man or woman to be worthy of her idol.

She must bear it. The more she can divest herself of personal feeling and go along with the new current, the better it will be for her, and she may have a double love, more in quantity, though not the same in quality, to make up for what she loses. But if she shows the least jealousy, or is a hard critic of the new comer, she is making a rift which will widen, and she must always bear in mind that the wife has the paramount right, and that any attempt to meddle with her claims over the brother is treason.

There is less danger in the case of a sister's husband, because women get on more easily with men than women, and because sisters have more common ground even after one is married. The single sister can be the devoted handmaid of the married one, with great benefit to both, and without exciting any jealousies, unless she is more than ordinarily foolish or exacting. Besides, owing to the much-talked-of redundancy of females, sisters often remain the first with each other through life, lean on one another, suffer and rejoice together, and preserve the same relative position with which they started as soon as their age brought them on such an equality that force of character could assert itself. One remains leader and originator, housekeeper and manager ; the other is her complement for life, and the tie is never loosened.

How needful this makes it to beware of evil habits of domineering, wrangling, or showing temper. How often has it been said that some families will behave better to anyone than to those they love best ! Family courtesy is almost a test of the honesty of our principles, for where there is least restraint our true selves are shown. Children scream and struggle it out, sulk in a corner, or give a blow ; the stronger get their own way, then relent when the weaker suffer. And when they are of larger growth, no scheme, no party can be settled without snarling words, cross innuendoes, whining complaints, till very often the worst tempered gets his or her own way, because of the certainty that only so is there any chance of peace.

In truth, giving up ought to be *taught* and wrangling put down in such early life that it should seem as impossible as lying or stealing ; but many persons are allowed to grow up without such training, and to them would earnestly say, Make rules of sisterly charity and peace, and treat

their transgression as serious sins to be repented of and confessed. Such, I mean, as contradicting elders—yes, or equals—pressing forward your scheme—objecting to or sneering at those of others, being out of temper in your own peculiar fashion, if you do not get exactly the plan or the place you want—making grievances.

Some people have the spirit of objection or contradiction so strongly that they never at first sight like what is proposed. They had better hold their tongues and consider, to find out whether they are in the right, or merely objecting. And when a scheme is on foot, it is hard to have tiresome people intruded, or your special favourites excluded by some contemptuous vote ; or to be put into the wrong boat or carriage ; or to be dragged on when you want to sketch or botanise. But if you put self out of the way, you will get a very fair amount of enjoyment after all ; and if self is in the way, however cockered, it will spoil all your pleasure. The parable about the uppermost rooms applies as much to pleasure as to pride. Those who may have to live together through life must learn to give up to one another ; and even if their course is to be different, how much better it would be to have undimmed recollections of delights enjoyed in common, than of the struggles and the frets accompanying and spoiling all !

The single sister may be the resource of the widowed or disappointed sister, and sometimes the choicest tie, that with the brother, lasts through life. He has perhaps been disappointed, and has come back again to the old *confidante*, who has the home recollections that no one else can share, and who fills up the void as far as any woman can. The tender protection often lasts even when the brother has a home of his own, and the sister nestles in or beside it. It is well for her if she have done nothing to lower or forfeit that blessed love—a love not only for earth, but for heaven—the love sanctified by our great Elder Brother.

One thing more I would mention in the sisterly relation. The eldest sister is often an excellent mother to the little ones, but rough and peremptory with those nearer to her, unless they happen to fit in with her own character ; and they are often unwilling to give way to her. Now, the only way to peace is for seniority to have its rights *most* distinctly acknowledged, and yet to be very forbearing in enforcing them. The younger girls should always own that their elder has the choice and the command, but she should be gracious and willing to yield to their tastes and wishes. When she is made governess, her power should be exactly defined, and she should use it with steadiness ; never going beyond it, however provoked. As to this matter of teaching young ones, it seems to me that it would be much better if it were oftener done by elder sisters. Of course, if they are devoid of good sense and steadiness, they cannot do it : but ‘ Oh, I hate teaching ; ’ ‘ The little ones would not mind me ; ’ ‘ I have no patience ; ’ or the false but sentimental excuse, ‘ Children never love the person who teaches them,’ are very poor reasons for not returning to one’s family the benefits of one’s own education.

As to the confinement and the regularity, they are exactly what is most useful to the character, and the thoroughness and grounding are what the studies need to deepen them. A girl who will give her mind to teaching, and force herself to patience and good temper, is binding her young sisters closer to her and doing far more good, because the work can be so much more complete, than by running after works outside her house. She must allow no liberties while she is acting governess over the lessons, but after them let her be heartily the sister.

Eldest daughters of a motherless family are often most excellent towards the children when they are little, but find it difficult to perceive when their sisters grow out of childhood and are on an equality, and try them much by unreasonably prolonging their tutelage and keeping them back. It is not exactly jealousy, but a certain pleasure in possessing power and the habit of importance, and they ought to strive against it; while the younger ones should remember that the eldest sister at home must always remain the head, and be deferred to. She is *prima inter pares*, when all are on a level of age, and this ought to be frankly owned on all sides, if for no other reason than to prevent jangles; but let her be most courteous and considerate, and bear her honours meekly. If a younger one surpass her in any attractive quality, she must meet it generously, and take pleasure in her sister's success—yes, even if she seem to be more her father's companion. Rivalry and jealousy are the most terrible of all foes to sisterly love. Let them never be spoken of lightly, or treated as a kind of evidence of fine feelings. They are hateful passions, destructive of all good, and should be prayed and struggled against as belonging to the spirit of Cain.

A CROSS IN THE SKY.

THE following account of a very beautiful aerial apparition seems too curious to be left in obscurity. A party of eight persons were together in a garden, when they suddenly beheld a large cross in the sky; hanging on the cross there was distinctly visible a very beautiful head at the top, but no body was attached to it. On the right arm of the cross there reposed a female figure, and upon the left arm, a child. The very words of an eye-witness are always the most satisfactory, so here is an account by a lady who saw the whole scene, and wrote this description shortly afterwards at the request of the writer of this paper.

*'Account of the Cross seen in the Sky, October 6th, 1870.—*I will answer the questions your friend has sent, with great pleasure, the extraordinary sight being ever present to my mind. The cross, which had the appearance of veined marble and of being perfectly solid, was exactly overhead, and appeared about half-past 5 P.M., and it continued for twenty minutes or half an hour without any alteration in size, and then gradually receded in the direction S.W., of course becoming smaller

and smaller to our view. The head of the cross (which was of very great length, I should say about thirty feet), lay towards the point between north and west, and the foot started downwards. The human head at the top was very beautiful; and the female figure on the right arm of the cross was exquisitely formed; the child on the left arm less perfect. There was not any colour, all looked like marble. The full-grown figure was recumbent on the back, while the child was on the face; a graceful pennant floated from the head of the cross. The sky was brilliantly blue, and no other cloud was to be seen anywhere near the cross. I cannot forbear to mention the singular thing which really startled the eight persons who were looking in amazed wonder at the beautiful vision (if I may so call it), when the female figure rose up to a sitting posture, and remained upright, till we lost sight of the whole in the distance. When I last saw it, it was not much larger than a square inch; during all this time not one of the edges lost its firm outline; and one more particular I must name to which my attention was called by the old gentleman who first saw it. At the foot of the cross or rather near it, there appeared bits as it were of grass and soil, as if the cross had been roughly pulled up from the earth. It was seen in Horsmonden, near Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Sir John Herschel gave the following explanation, which we have been permitted to use:—He had no doubt that the appearance was produced by the same causes as some beautiful mock suns with halos which had been seen the day before, and were described in the *Times*.

‘The general appearance of these mock suns seems to be a combination of arches or segments of arches of white light, cutting or only touching one another. When perfect, the real sun is in the centre, and the meeting-places of the arches are disposed symmetrically around him, while one broad band will pass through the sun itself parallel to the horizon, and completely encircling it. When the arches cut or touch one another there often appear other suns or masses of light, generally round, but which may seem to assume different shapes by distortion. It seldom happens that the whole is seen in perfect symmetry, the state of the air not being everywhere equally fit to produce it, so that often only an isolated portion may be seen, with nothing apparently to correspond to it on the other side of the sun. The cause of the appearance is the formation of excessively minute crystals of ice in the higher region of the air, which reflect the rays of the sun, according to very complicated laws, and in connection also with the appearance of the large white halo round the sun which we sometimes see in a thin, white fleecy sky in frosty weather. One very fine appearance was on the shores of the Baltic on the 5th of June, 1849, another during the French occupation of Moscow.’

To the foregoing account, the following particulars, given by the same eye-witness, may be added:—The head at the top of the cross reminded her strongly of one she had seen in Italy, either by Guido or Guercino.

The figures of the lovely female form and the infant resembled some representations of the Blessed Virgin and Child. Except the eight persons who saw the wonderful sight at Sprivers, in the parish of Horsmonden, no one has ever been heard of who had observed the appearance. The head on the cross was looking down and was really lifelike. The lady adds that the sight of that cross is as present to her mind now, as at the moment when she first saw it.

Was it natural or supernatural? is the question that first occurs to the mind on hearing the wonderful history. That somewhat similar sights have been seen is undoubted. Armies fighting in the clouds and Constantine's cross will occur at once to the mind; and those were in time of war: so the beautiful sight we are considering was at the time of the Franco-German war. Various crosses in the sky have been mentioned, but without figures; and besides they were generally of light, whereas Sir John Herschel seems to have thought this a cloud. One of light is mentioned by early Christian writers, St. Cyril of Jerusalem and others; it was surrounded by a halo or rainbow and appeared over the Mount of Olives at the festival of Pentecost. Another was said to have been seen at night over Golgotha; it was black, and appeared to blot out the stars behind it.* But this combination of a cross and figures seems to be unique. What was the use of such an apparition? is another question one frequently hears. Undoubtedly it is the spirit of the age—an unwise one perhaps—to try to discover the use of everything.

Whether natural or supernatural, whether intended in some sort to remind those who saw it of those signs in heaven, which with wars and rumours of wars shall precede the end of all things, or meant only to bring holy thoughts to their minds by the sight of a sunset cloud shaped into the blessed emblem of our Faith, and of Him who 'cometh with clouds,' we know not, nor need we inquire. But surely this wonderful appearance would have been of *use* enough, if it had led but one of those eight who gazed upon it with mingled awe and wonder, to a deeper and truer grasp of the Faith, and a warmer and more enduring love of the Crucified.

BOG-OAK.

WIVERTON, *Feast of the Invention of the Cross*, 1875.

PAPERS ON SISTERHOODS.

XIV.—PRACTICAL TRAINING.

It will have been understood from the previous paper that one chief aim to be pursued by the founders of a religious community, is to train its members to *think*, and to use their intellectual faculties actively in matters

* Nor can we forget the three crosses that were seen immediately after the fatal accident on the Matterhorn. We believe that this last was mirage, like the Spectre of the Brocken; but in all these cases it seems to us that God makes use of natural causes to impress a great thought.

of devotion. This cuts at the root of the error which treats religion as a matter of feeling only, and prepares the way for the view of practical work which regards it as a part of the Christian life, and not as something independent of it.

Consequently, after the religious studies already sketched out have been pursued for some time, and given their necessary prominence, it will be found desirable to proceed to the thorough mastering of all that concerns the direction of a household. As matters now stand, it is for the most part improbable that the ladies who seek to enter a Sisterhood will be versed in domestic concerns; and that for two simple reasons. First, training of the kind is unfortunately much neglected in families of the social grade whence Anglican Sisters chiefly come, for matters of this sort are entrusted to the care of upper servants, while the young ladies attend merely to accomplishments and social amusements. Next, where this is not the case, it is usually the helpful and managing member of the family who cannot possibly be spared from the fulfilment of home duties, and though there are brilliant exceptions, the result is that the majority of postulants are quite unfit at their entrance to govern a household.

Yet this is exactly what everyone of them is likely to have to do alone, and certain to have to do jointly with others. As the *mind* had to be trained for the higher purposes of religion, so now the *eye* and *hand* need to be disciplined for active work. No one who has not had much experience of the thoroughly uneducated can realize how entirely many things which appear to us purely innate and unconscious perceptions are the result of careful training. Let any lady take a girl out of a work-house, bring her into a parlour, and bid her put an ornament on the very middle of a chimney-piece, or lay a cloth so that the centre of the pattern shall be over the centre of the table, and she will all but invariably find the article several inches out of place, even if there be something, say a picture, over the chimney-piece, already marking the centre distinctly. Now this is a matter where, on first thoughts, one would fancy that nothing save the ordinary faculty of sight was necessary. Experience proves that untrained sight and trained sight are two different things. Let us apply this rule to the ordinary details of household work, and it will at once be recognized how girls may grow to maturity without ever asking themselves how their clothes are cut out and sewn, how their meals are provided and cooked, how their rooms are kept clean and orderly; and therefore without the slightest notion either of doing such things themselves or of effectively superintending and criticizing the doing of them by others.

Yet a large, a very large part of active Sisterhood work must needs consist in discharging one or other of these functions, doing household work or teaching the art of doing it, or seeing that it is properly done by those employed to do it. No industrial schools, no reformatories, no parochial mission operations, no effectual nursing, can be carried on well by Sisters who have not got this training themselves. And it is the business

of Superiors to see that they get it, one and all. Each lady who presents herself as a candidate should pass through exactly such a course of instruction as a wise mother would give her daughter if she were preparing to become the wife of a poor man, with the certain task of having to manage a narrow income and to make it go far.

The sedulous avoidance of disorder, and still more of waste, should be inculcated as religious duties. The time-table, if enforced as it ought to be, will ensure punctuality. *Thoroughness* ought also to be rigidly exacted. It is necessary to say here a few words about wastefulness. This fault is one which is almost certain to make its way unchecked into a Sisterhood if great pains be not taken to exclude it from the very first. The reason is very simple. The rule of poverty in a community, unless that community be so very poor as to lack absolute necessities, takes off the sense of strain from all the inmates except those who are directly charged with care of the finance; because the sense in which the term 'poverty' is used is that of giving up private and personal ownership in anything, not in that of corporate want. A society may be collectively wealthy, and yet no member of that society may have any right of personal use or enjoyment of its wealth, and therefore all the members may be poor. So it must needs happen in a large community that the great majority of the Sisters, accustomed to have their meals and clothes and all their real wants provided as a matter of course, without any forethought on their own part, or any planning how to make the most of slender means, are likely, in the absence of previous training, to be altogether wasteful and reckless in the use of stores of all kinds, just as servants commonly are; or, at the very least, to incur expenditure far beyond necessary limits. The wife of a struggling professional man, with a large family and the imperative need of keeping up a respectable appearance, feels the real pinch of poverty very much more than the inmate of a Sisterhood, who has no appearance to keep up at all, and need not anxiously balance between boots for the children and somewhat more appetizing meals for the toiling husband. The spiritual difference between the two is that the Sister voluntarily abandons for life all possibilities of wealth and luxury, whereas the married woman endures poverty simply because she cannot help herself, and looks forward wistfully to the ease and riches which may come some day. But practically the result is that a good wife is saving, while an equally well-meaning Sister is wasteful from never realizing the duty of economy. Therefore it is necessary to impress on her from the outset that waste is a *sin*—a marked contrast to the dealings of God in nature, where nothing is suffered to go to waste, but infinite frugality underlies and sustains the infinite lavishness of His gifts. But even when this has been learnt as matter of principle, it needs to be taught further as matter of practice, and by means of experimental lessons. The series of little volumes called the Finchley Manuals are very good examples of text-books for the theory, but mere book-work is not enough. The candidates should be

regularly instructed in shopping, marketing, and household work ; told how to distinguish good articles—whether of food, clothing, or furniture—from bad ones ; made familiar with the prices of all such articles as they are likely to require ; shown what goods are best got in wholesale and in bulk, and what ought to be procured in small quantities ; and above all, trained to keep accounts accurately, to write letters clearly and tersely, avoiding vagueness and diffuseness, and compelled to acquire a legible handwriting, if, as is most likely, they have fallen into the angular, scratchy, illegible scrawl which most school-girls pick up, but which is quite unsuitable for the many business documents a Sister may probably have to draw up in the course of her duties.

The other matter, that of thoroughness, is of hardly less importance. Scamped work and slatternly makeshifts ought to be entirely alien from Sisterhood life in all its parts. Yet here again want of training in method will prevent very glaring defects from being noticed. A Sister ought never to have upon her lips the words 'It will do,' unless the matter in hand be something which regards her own private comfort only. And even then, if the makeshift be the result of neglect of duty on some one else's part, it is for the interest of the whole Society that it should not be passed over, but attention be drawn to it that it may be rectified. A Sister, for instance, who finds that the water has not been replenished in her bedroom, or that the plate or knife laid for her at dinner has not been properly cleaned, acts selfishly, if in the thought of exhibiting cheerful self-denial in her own person, she suffers a piece of carelessness to pass which may by degrees infect the whole arrangements of the household. It is hardly needful to say that the opposite fault, that of making a selfish uproar and fuss about trifling personal inconveniences, is to be even more sedulously avoided. An accident, not likely to be repeated, or caused by exceptional pressure, may very well be passed over and condoned, but a piece of neglect or sluttishness is an evil to be put down like any other evil, and of course the person whose business it is to get it put down is the first who is cognizant of it. It will be found no easy thing to accustom untrained people to habits of thorough neatness and order, and to business ways of doing things. And yet it is essential. For at the very least, two people in the very smallest Community have its welfare dependent on their efficiency, the Superior and the Housekeeper. In larger societies the Bursar or Treasurer is added to the list of business doers ; and the theory of all well-organized Religious Houses is that offices are not for life, but only for a term of years, or during efficient discharge of them. It is therefore highly expedient to have as many members of the Society as possible fit to undertake such offices. At any moment, sudden absence, illness, or death, may prostrate the capable officers of a Society, and disorder, confusion, and absolute insolvency follow on the blunders of their untrained substitutes. Further, every healthy and prosperous Sisterhood finds its work grow and expand with time, and calls for the establishment of fresh branches or departments increase with such

expansion. But the difficulty always is, as pointed out earlier in these papers, to find competent chiefs for these divisional charges without stripping the central House of its necessary staff.

It is impossible to enable an average or a dull woman to fill adequately the place of a clever, trained, and efficient one, but it is perfectly feasible to prevent any very serious blundering by submitting one and all to a course of instruction which shall familiarize them with the discharge of the usual duties of a mistress of a household.

The confusion of accounts, the difficulties with tradesmen, the discomfort and yet the heavy cost of a House where a woman with no knowledge of business is head, are not merely injurious to the influence of the Society amongst people in the world, but from the incessant worry and wear and tear they occasion, are highly damaging to the spiritual tone of the Community, besides sowing the seeds of unending bitterness and disputes as to the acts and persons accountable for the break-down.

It is the more needful to dwell with some detail upon all this, because the evil is not likely to show itself at the very first, but to creep in with insidious step when the Community grows a little.

A very small Sisterhood trains itself. Everyone has to put her hand to everything in turn, and learns by practice, besides being able to talk over the whole affairs of the Community in familiar conference, so as to know exactly where it is necessary to economize, and what means are at the disposal of the Society. But when a Community grows, and the work begins to be more formally mapped out into departments, the gain in speciality of knowledge and occupation is heavily counterbalanced by loss in general breadth and grasp. The Sister who is unequalled in teaching an infant class, may prove a mere infant herself if called on to deal with questions of rent, taxes, and butcher's bills. And consequently, she cannot be safely put at the head of any Branch House where she would have all these things and many like them to consider. Hence the necessity of subjecting all to a preliminary training, and the wisdom of obliging them to pass through every department in turn ; so that, although their bent for some particular kind of work may be so clearly marked as to make it expedient to single it out as their chief employment, nevertheless it may be feasible to entrust them with a temporary charge of any other description, or with the general headship of any dependent House without any fears of total disorganization and collapse.

(To be continued.)

R. F. L.

THE MISSIONARY CONFERENCE OF 1875.

BY CHARLES RAIKES, C.S.I.

IN last November, a few of the clergy who live near Warminster met together, and proposed that a Conference of Churchmen should be held at Warminster, or some other suitable place, for the purpose of discussing matters connected with Foreign Missions.

The Bishop of the Diocese approved of the proposed conference, which, under the guiding hand of Sir James Erasmus Philipps, the Vicar of Warminster, soon assumed a definite shape, and wider proportions than had been in the first instance contemplated. In due time Sir James was appointed Chairman of a large Committee, with the Rev. the Hon. Sidney Meade, Rector of Wylke, as Secretary. The interest taken in the affair was so general that it was determined to hold the conference in London, where it has just come off, with a degree of success which leads us to hope that this is the first of a series of similar meetings.

Here is the programme, which was carried out fully, with the exception that we had Lord Nelson in the chair at the evening meeting in the place of the Lord Mayor, who was prevented from attending :—

The Conference will be held in the large Hall of the City Terminus Hotel, Cannon Street, which is five minutes by rail from Charing Cross.

The Conference will be preceded by Evensong at 4.0 p.m. on Monday, June 21st, at St. Paul's Cathedral, with a Sermon by the Rev. Canon Miller, D.D. ; and by a celebration of Holy Communion at 8.30 a.m., in the Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, on Tuesday.

The Morning Meeting will be from 10.30 to 1. The Lord Bishop of London will preside.

The Afternoon Meeting „ 2.0 to 5.0. The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury will preside.

The Evening Meeting „ 7.30 to 10.0. The Lord Mayor of London will preside.

The Subjects proposed for Discussion are—

A Native Ministry ; the best Mode of Developing it.

The False Religions of the World ; the best Ways of Dealing with them.

The Manners and Customs of Western Christianity ; how far to be Enforced on Converts to the Faith.

The Home Supply and Training of Men and Women for Work in Foreign Missions.

The best mode of calling out a greater Missionary Spirit among Home Churchmen.

As a considerable number of what are called High Churchmen had a hand in this conference, it was a happy circumstance that the sermon, which served as a prelude, was preached by so honest, so able, so distinguished an Evangelical as Canon Miller. And his discourse was worthy of himself and of the occasion. He therein touched the cord which vibrated throughout the meeting, and formed the leading idea of the approaching conference. I quote the following sentence from the outline of Canon Miller's sermon, given in the *Guardian*, June 23 :—

In the Church there must be order, polity, and government, and therefore there must be rulers. It was wrong to fall into either extreme—whether to look on the inner life of the believer as a purely subjective thing, or to look on Church life as all in all. The spiritual life must be maintained by private prayer, but it must also be nourished by life in the Church. Adverting to the proposed increase of the Episcopate in India, the Canon said that it was idle to talk of three Bishops in India as sufficient for the work, and therefore he rejoiced to read of the meeting at Lambeth Palace on Friday last, and stated that the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, had promised £15,000 each towards the work. The Church Missionary

Society had expressed its concurrence in the scheme, and in supporting it, he held that it was for a work which was distinctly in accord with the mind of Christ.

I have quoted this from the *Guardian*, and it is to be noticed that this journal, which reflects the mind of so many moderate Churchmen, had already directed attention to the paramount importance of this great subject—'The increase of the Indian Episcopate,' with respect to the influence thus to be exerted on the Missions of the Church in India. And it was very remarkable during the progress of the conference how often this special matter, which formed no part of the programme, either directly or incidentally, came to the surface. Without going any great length into details, I will give a short note of some of the arguments used.

First—The honour due to the primitive model of the Church of Christ.

Second—We ought to offer a complete career, including the various dignities in the Church, in the interest of our experienced Missionaries, as well as of young men seeking a Missionary life.

Third—That it is not fair to ask young men to give up home, country, and friends, and to accept a career in which alone an Englishman has no power of rising or improving his *status*. Ambition is the last infirmity of noble minds, and few young men of spirit have entirely mortified every aspiration so completely as to be insensible to the whispers of this subtle passion. The God of Grace is also the God of Nature, and we ought not to start by ignoring the natural feelings of the human heart. We say this, although we fully recognise the truth, that the Kingdom of God is not of this world.

Fourth—Native Clergy do not care for a republican system, and would be glad that the chief Missionary at a station had episcopal dignity and position. In due time we should have native Bishops in Asia, as well as in other parts of the world.

Fifth—Socially, in India it would be a good thing that there should be Missionary Bishops, though they need not have salutes, palaces, nor large salaries.

Sixth—That young men of spirit and promise would be more ready to enter the Mission field if they knew that they would be closely associated with some noble-hearted Missionary Bishop who would be their guide and friend. It is too much to mortify affection as well as ambition.

Seventh—That the Indian State Bishops, though truly excellent, had duties extending over so vast an area, that it was simply impossible that they could act as Missionary Bishops, or take a personal supervision of our Missionaries.

Eighth—That the discipline in the Missions would be improved, and the reports sent in with more regularity.

Last—That we have men amongst our Indian Missionaries well qualified to take the office of a bishop, *e.g.*, one, of whom the late Bishop of

Peterborough said at a public meeting, 'He (the Missionary) is far more fit for this episcopal throne than I am.'

These were some of the pleas urged, and it is not too much to hope, that one of the results of this great conference may be, that a new impulse will be given to the movement in favour of a large increase of our Indian Episcopate. We want men already eminent and beloved in the Mission field, who shall, as *Suffragan Bishops, work under commissions from the State Bishops*, and within certain limits (see *Guardian*, June 16th). So much for this important and interesting branch of Mission work, which, as I have observed, was only incidentally handled, as it formed no part of the written subject before the conference.

I now turn to an interesting episode in the history of this meeting, which alone would suffice to stamp the whole affair as a success.

A grave and venerable Missionary, universally beloved and respected (Dr. Caldwell, of Tinnevely), read a paper in which he argued that it was not politic nor necessary to demand from converts an unconditional surrender of caste.

He was answered by a Brahmin convert. This young man, who spoke excellent English in perfect taste, with a modest dignity which carried conviction to all hearts, declared, that when he accepted Christ as his Saviour, he at once and for ever threw off every rag of caste. That he was of a family of Brahmins who could trace their ancestry for three thousand years back. That it was not the Brahmin, but the low caste man, who attempted to cling to the shreds of caste when he became a Christian. He went on to describe a visit to some Lutheran church in India. The church porter asked him what his caste was? To this, he (the Brahmin) rejoined—'What business is that of yours?' Said the porter, 'Oh! Why of course the Brahmins sit here, and the low caste men there.' Then, thought the speaker, the whole arrangement is so opposed to Christianity, that he went away, and declined to take part in a Christian church which did homage to caste—caste and Christianity cannot go together! This speech of the converted Brahmin, Soobra Manyam, was so sound, and delivered so well, that the large assembly was delighted. The Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, who was in the chair at the time (having succeeded the Archbishop, who had to go to the House of Lords), in gathering up the threads of the various discourses observed, that as to caste we had been treated to a *debate*, which was even better than a *conference*.

My own reflection on the occasion was, that if the Missionaries had gone round the world to pick out a model convert, they could not have produced a greater and more durable sensation than was made by the appearance of the Brahmin convert after this (impromptu) fashion. I can understand the liberal feeling and extreme charity which leads Dr. Caldwell to his conclusions with regard to a certain admixture of caste and Christianity; but as caste is in reality a species of religion, I think we should have done with the old *cultus* before we accept the new.

I will not go over a list of the speakers at this interesting conference. Suffice it to say, that the most eminent men in England, both thinkers and actors in the Mission field, were fully and well represented. In respect to Mission work, the most valuable evidence is that of persons who have dispassionately observed the workmen during a sufficiently extended period of time. Of such evidence, as regards India, we had abundance. But little, if any, lay testimony was adduced with respect to other parts of the work proceeding in the Mission field. This deficiency may, I trust, be avoided in another year. I am happy to say that it is proposed to hold a second conference at Oxford next year, and in common with a large number of moderate Church people, I congratulate Sir J. Philipps and his friends on the success of the first meeting. There was not one disturbing element or cross word spoken. The attendance during part of the day was large, and the interest was sustained throughout.

If Christian Church people will thus take 'sweet counsel together,' without troubling their heads about high, low, or broad, with the object of mutual improvement, encouragement, refreshment, and edification, the result will be to the honour of His name who is the great Head of the Church.

THE
MONTHLY PACKET
OF
EVENING READINGS
For Members of the English Church.

SEPTEMBER, 1875.

ODDS AND ENDS OF WEATHER WISDOM AND FRAGMENTS OF FOLK LORE.

JUNE.

And what is so rare as a day in June!
Then if ever come perfect days,
When heaven tries the earth if it be in tune,
And over it softly her warm ear lays.

Lowell.

THERE can be no doubt that the derivation of the names which belong to the respective months is a vexed question, and one that is likely to remain undecided, since no two authorities can be found to agree upon the subject. June is no better off in this way than any of her predecessors; indeed, in some respects she is rather worse; for though many suggestions have been made, most of them are so wild, that it is obviously impossible that they can have the faintest approach to probability, much less to truth; so that, like the meteoric lights, they only serve to confuse and mystify, and so lead away from any chance of finding where the real meaning lies hidden; for instance, some writers (Macrobius, among others)* say that June was called after Junius Brutus, because in this month Tarquinius, being driven from the city, he, in pursuance of his vow, dedicated a temple upon Mount Cælius to the goddess Carna, who, according to Ovid, by her power opens and shuts all things. Still, as the name of the month was in use long before Brutus was in existence, 'this etymology does not admit of argument.' Ovid himself makes the goddess Juno lay claim both to the month and name, while the latter has been also said to come from Juniores, the younger part of the Romans, to whom Romulus assigned the defence of the city, or from the old word

* 'Non nulli putaverunt Junium mensem a Junio Bruto, qui primus Romæ consul factus est, nominatum; quod hoc mense, id est, Kalendis Juniis, pulso Tarquinio, sacrum Carnæ Deæ in Cælio monte voti reus fecerit.'—*Aur. Macrobii Saturnaliorum*, lib. 1.

Junonius.* Nor were the old English names more synonymous, though in their case the meaning is generally self-evident. Vorstigern says that 'Vnto June ovr Saxon ancestors gave the name of Weyd Monat, because their beasts did then *weyd* in the *meddowes*, that is to say, go to feed there, and hereof a meddow is also in the Teutoneche called a weyd, and of weyd we yet retain our word wade, which we understand of going through watery places, such as meddowes are wont to be!' Certainly drainage has done something for us since the days in which Vorstigern wrote, for whatever else may happen to us, we are no longer required to wade when we go

'Abroad in the meadows to see the young lambs.'

June was also called Woad monath (weed month), Mede month, Midsumor monath, Breack monat or Brach monat, (*i. e.* breaking the soil, from the Saxon Braecan), Solstitialis, and lastly Leda Erra, of which Dr. F. Sayers (*Disquisitions*, p. 255) says: 'I can find no satisfactory account of the word *Leda*; Lida, or Litha, signifies in the Icelandic tongue to *move* or *pass over*, and I am in some degree supported by Bede's remarks on this month in conjecturing that Leda implies the sun's passing its greatest height, and that Leda Erra consequently means the first month of the sun's descent, though Lide is by some deemed the same as smooth air, or *set lift*; but this latter explanation would seem to stand in some need of an explanation itself.

June can further lay claim to the two adjectives, jocund and jolly, both of which were probably at first applied with a view to getting 'Apt alliteration's artful aid'—still, any way June it was jolly, and more appropriately so too, long before that epithet was as hard-worked as it is now; and I believe also that the Devonshire *junket*, of which I have often heard, but seldom either seen or tasted, was nothing more than a *June cate*, or delicacy, which belonged as especially to June as the gilly-flower (July flower) did to July.

Being the first of the summer months, June has a right to the proverbs and sayings which belong more especially to summer, though these are by no means so numerous as one would expect. 'A dry summer never made a dear peck,' with its Cornish equivalent, 'A dry summer never begs its bread,' is the first English adage which I can remember, and one which is probably founded on fact, seeing that—thanks to St. Swithin and his foreign ally St. Médard!—a dry summer is an unheard-of thing, in England at any rate, where the rain it raineth every day. As our summer is popularly supposed to consist of two hot days and a thunder-storm, we may as well make the best of a bad business and adopt the German saying, 'Sommerregen glücklich die Felder die ihn bekommen,' (Happy are the fields that receive summer rain.) Still too much of a good thing is good for naething, and most of us have had

* Vossius produces three etymologies for June, giving the preference to none of the three—first, from *Varro*, 'a junioribus'; second, 'a Junone'; third, 'a judendo.'

occasion to sympathise with the weather-bound tourist, who, when he despairingly asked 'Does it *always* rain here?' was answered 'Na, sir, it sometimes snaws!'

Ray certainly gives an apparently contradictory proverb—

'When the sand doth feed the clay,
(Which is in a wet summer,)
England cries Woe and well-a-day.
But when the clay doth feed the sand,
(Which is in a dry summer,)
Then it is well with England;'

because there is more clay than sandy ground in England! Any way, be this a fact or not, drought never brought dearth in England yet; for 'Whoso hath but a mouth, shall ne'er in England suffer drouth;' while the Cornish rule is, 'Every day a shower of rain, and on Sunday two'!

Still,

'There's nought so surely pays its debt,
As wet the dry, and dry the wet.'

And Lord Bacon was clearly of the same opinion when he said, that 'A serene autumn denotes a windy winter, a windy winter a rainy spring, a rainy spring a serene summer, a serene summer a windy autumn, so that the air is on a balance seldom debtor to itself.'

'After drought cometh rain,
After pleasure cometh pain :
But yet it continueth not so,
For after rain
Cometh sunshine again,
And joy after pain and woe.

There are two French proverbs which show what effect summer is expected to have on its heir winter (for winter is summer's heir; and what is more, will find out what summer has laid up), namely—

'L'été pluvieux, l'hiver rigoureux,'

and

'L'été orageux, l'hiver pluvieux,'

which has a counterpart in the English, 'A warm winter and a cold summer never brought a good harvest.' Another of Lord Bacon's axioms was, 'Generally a moist and cold summer portends a hard winter;' and so, let me add, do a large quantity of hawthorn blossom, or dog-roses; for there is no summer but has its winter: indeed, according to the Bohemians, the time will come when winter will ask (like the Ant in La Fontaine's fable), 'What were you doing all the summer?''* Let us hope that we shall be better provided than the poor cigale was with an answer, or at any rate have a more sympathetic friend to apply to.

* 'Que faisiez-vous au temps chaud ?
Dit-elle à cette emprunteuse :
Nuit et jour, à tout venant,
Je chantois ; ne vous déplaie.
Vous chantiez ? j'en suis fort aise —
Hé bien ! dansez maintenant.'

There is a saying which is current in Finland, but true elsewhere, that 'Summer comes with a bound, but winter comes yawning;' while the French couple the two together in the not very grateful, 'L'hiver nous fait plus de mal que l'été ne nous fait de bien,' which perhaps may be true of those people who spend

'L'hiver au lit et auprès du feu,
L'été au soleil et au jeu,'

for the Italians speak of summer as the mother of the poor.

It was Bruce's second wife, Elizabeth, daughter of the Earl of Ulster, who, when she was told of the coronation of her husband, said that she hoped he who was king in summer might not prove an exile in winter. These words were thought prophetic; and may they not have been the original of the Scotch saying, *à propos* of a beggar, that he is in summer a king, in winter naething?—at any rate, the same thought is in both. I must confess that I am at a loss to know the meaning of the proverb, 'An ass is cold even in summer,' unless it is intended to convey that an ass is so stupid that he cannot even expect the proper and 'seasonable' weather at the proper time.*

If you are anxious to know what the summer is likely to be, and do not feel satisfied with Lord Bacon's method of ascertaining, you must have recourse to the Shepherd of Banbury, who states as a fact, in his Calendar, that 'if the last eighteen days of February and ten days of March be for the most part rainy, then the spring and summer are like to be so too, and I never knew a great drought but it entered at that season;' presumably by 'that season' the shepherd means February and March, but he is not very clear.

To return, however, to June itself. An old almanac (1680) that I saw the other day, gave, among divers and sundry other excellent maxims, some rules by which one was to manage one's health during the several months. Those for June were :—

At the full of the moon this month and next, gather your herbs to keep dry for the whole year. Shear your sheep the moon increasing. (The same rule holds good in Sussex to this day with regard to killing pigs, whose flesh is supposed to wax and wane with the moon.) Take heed of cutting herbs or flowers with a knife, but rather gather them with your fingers. Let honest, moderate labour procure you sweat. Use thin and light diets, for the stomach is weaker now than in the former months. Sage and sweet butter are an excellent breakfast. (The author is evidently of opinion that

'A little in the morning, nothing at noon,
And a light supper, doth make to live long.')

Lie not unadvisedly on the ground, nor over-hastily drink. Clarified whey, with sage, scurvy-grass, ale, and wormwood beer, are wholesome drinks. Green herbs, excellent against choler.

* It is more probably because the ass thrives in warm climates and cannot live in cold ones.—Ed.

The harvest is the subject about which the June proverbs chiefly concern themselves. Tusser begins by telling us that

‘Fine weather in June sets corn in tune ;’

which is corroborated by

‘June if sunny brings harvest early ;’

for ‘from shearing (sheep ?) to earing (harvest ?) is but six weeks ; so that now is the time when the bird-tenter’s song may be heard.’

‘Away, birds, away,
And come no more to-day.
Away, birds, away,
Take an ear, and leave an ear,
And come no more for seven year—
Away, birds, away ;’

for

‘Should the farmer chance to come,
You must fly and I must run.’

Another saying tells how ‘Mist in May and heat in June makes the harvest come right soon.’ Though at the same time

‘They that go to their corn in May
Will come weeping away ;
But they that go in June
Will come back in another tune.’

June has also the hay to attend to, for ‘C’est le mois de Juin qui fait le foin ;’ but though it is a cardinal rule that you must make hay while the sun shines,* yet you must watch your opportunity to do so, for a dry June is neither to be expected nor desired, since ‘A good leak in June sets all things in tune ;’ while ‘Juin larmoyeuse, rend le laboureur joyeuse ;’ and ‘La pluie pendant le mois de Juin, Donne belle avoine et chétif foin.’ The first cock of hay is said to drive the cuckoo away ; while *Notes and Queries* (4th Series, vol. i. p. 614) connects the cuckoo with the harvest—

‘When the weirling shrieks at night,
Sow the seed with the morning light ;
But ’ware when the cuckoo swells its throat,
Harvest flies from the mooncall’s note ;’

for the cuckoo and the mooncall are no doubt the same.

Thunder in June has also a great effect : ‘S’il tonne au mois de Juin, Année de paille et de foin ;’ and the books of knowledge add that thunder in June signifieth the same year that woods shall be overthrown with winds, and great ragings shall be of lions and wolves, and so like of other harmful beasts. *A propos* of storms, I remember seeing—where, I quite forget—a curious account given by an English poet of the thirteenth century of the reason why storms are dangerous. When our Blessed Lord suffered death, He bound the devil and broke down hell’s gates, in order to let out those that suffered there. His visit was attended with such terrible

* ‘When the sunne shinth make hay, which is to say,
Take time when time comth, lest time steal away.’—*Heywood*.

thunder that the devils have been afraid of thunder ever since, and if any of them happen to be caught in a storm, they fly as quick as wind, and kill men and destroy trees, &c., which they meet in their way. This is the reason that men get killed in storms," and this is also the reason, according to the "Golden Legend," why it is well to ring the church-bells during a thunderstorm, a practice of which traces may still be found here and there in the south of England, while it still exists in full force in France and Germany. It is said, 'the evil spirytes that ben in the region of th' ayre doubte moche when they here the belles ringen when it thondreth, and when grete tempestes and rages of whether happen, to the end, that the feindes and wycked spirytes should ben abashed and flee and cease of the movynge of tempeste.' Fuller, however, gives it as his opinion that 'bells are no effectual charm against lightning.' The frequent firing of abbey churches by lightning confutes the proud motto commonly written on the bells in their steeples, wherein each entitled itself to a six-fold efficacy :

' Men's death I tell, by doleful knell,
Lightning and thunder I break asunder,
The sleepy head I raise from bed,
The winds so fierce I do disperse,
On Sabbath all to church I call,
Men's cruel rage I do assuage,
And tho' my voice is heard on high,
I never yet did tell a lye.' *

Lord Bacon endeavours to find a reason for the belief in the efficacy of the bells on rational grounds : ' It has been anciently reported, and is still received, that extreme applause and shoutings of people assembled in multitudes have so rarified and so broken the air, that birds flying over have fallen down, the air not being able to support them ; and it is believed by some that great ringing of bells in populous cities have chased away thunder, and also dissipated pestilent air, all which may be also from the concussion of the air, and not from the sound.'

* The bell of the great minster at Schaffhausen has this inscription—

' Funera plango,	Fulgura frango,	Sabbata pango,
Excito lentos,	Dissipo ventos,	Paco cruentos ;'

which seems to have been taken from the old rhyme given in the *Helpe to Discourse*, London, 1633—

' En ego campana nunquam denuntio vane.
Laudo Deum verum Plebem voco congreco clerum.
Defunctos plango vivos voco fulmina frango
Vox mea, vox vitæ, voco vos ad sacra venite.
Sanctos collendo, toniture fugo, fumera claudio,
Funera plango, etc.'

While Barnaby Gouge gives the following—

' I saw myself at Nurnberg, once a town in Toring coast,
A bell that with this title bold herself did proudly boast—
" By name I Mary calléd am, with sound I put to flight,
The thunder cracks and hurtful storms and every wicked spright." '

But the best advice for present times is that given in Ray—

' When thou dost hear a tolling knell,
Then think upon thy passing bell ;
When that bell begins to toll,
Lord have mercy on thy soul.'

The demons were not alone in their dislike to church bells, for there are several instances given in Thorpe of the Trolls' hatred of bells, and how the Swedish peasants believe that they have been driven out of the country by the sound. It is said that a farmer found a Troll sitting very disconsolate on a stone near Tiis lake (in Zealand), and taking him for a decent Christian man, asked where he was going. 'Ah!' said the Troll, 'I am going to leave the place as quickly as possible, for I can stay here no longer, those bells keep up such an eternal ringing and dinging!' The English fairies had the same objection, and when the church at Inkberrow, in Worcestershire, was taken down and rebuilt upon a new site, the fairies, whose haunt was near the new place, took offence, and showed that they objected by carrying the materials back at night to the old locality. At length, however, the church was triumphant, but for long after the following lament was heard :—

'Neither sleep, neither lie,
For Inkbrow' ting-tangs hang so nigh ;'

and strangely enough, the fairies made their lament correspond as truly with the chimes as did the celebrated

'Turn again, Whittington,
Lord Mayor of London town.*'

The same characteristic belongs to the hill-folk in Jutland, who bring us back to the thunder again, for they are excessively frightened during a storm, and when they see bad weather coming on, lose no time in getting to the shelter of their hills. (They are hardly singular in this practice.) This terror is the reason that they cannot bear the rolling of a drum, which reminds them of thunder, so that a good receipt for banishing them is to beat a drum every day in the neighbourhood of their hills, for they immediately pack up and depart to some quieter residence. Mr. Keightley thinks that this dislike of thunder may be traced to the thunder-god Thor's enmity to the Trolls, and he tells an amusing story of the expedient resorted to by a farmer who, having lived for some time on friendly terms with a neighbouring hill man, yet wished to avoid shocking his neighbours by asking him to his child's christening. The swine-herd undertook to solve the difficulty without hurting the Troll's feelings. Accordingly he went to the hill, and invited the Troll to be at the party, and the hill man (after having given a christening present of a sackful of gold) inquired what guests were expected.

'Ah!' said the boy, 'we are to have a great parcel of strangers and great people, and first and foremost there are to be three priests and a bishop.'

'Hem,' muttered the hill man. 'However, these gentlemen usually only look after the eating and drinking; they will never take any notice of me. Who else will there be?'

* The same story is told of Botna, in Sweden, where the Troll declared—

'Pleasant it were in Botna hill to dwell
Were it not for the sound of that plaguy bell.'

‘Then we have asked St. Peter and St. Paul.’

‘Hem, hem! However, there will be a bye-place for me behind the stove.’

‘Will there be anybody else?’

‘Then Our Lady is coming.’

‘Hem, hem, hem! However, there’s one comfort; guests of such high rank usually come late and go away early. But tell me, my lad, what music shall we have?’

‘Music!’ said the boy. ‘How can you ask? Drums, of course!’

‘Drums!’ repeated the Troll, quite taken aback. ‘I shall stay at home in that case; so thank your master for the invitation, and tell him that I cannot come. I did but once go out to take a walk, and some people began to beat a drum, so I hurried home with all speed; but just as I reached my door, they flung the drumstick after me, and broke one of my shins. I have been lame of that leg ever since, so no more of that kind of music again for me.’

To return to June. Midsummer-day is so rich in superstitions of all kinds, that it seems as if it had left very little to be divided among the other noticeable days. St. Nicomede, for instance, has no proverb, but St. Fortunatus, who is also commemorated on the 1st, is better off, for in Bohemia they say if St. Fortunatus’ day be fine we may expect a fruitful season.

The 5th of June belongs to our own St. Boniface, the Apostle of Germany, who is usually represented as hewing down an oak while clad in full canonicals, on account of his great deed in cutting down the sacred oak at Geismar. Some time between 725 and 731, during the reign of Charles Martel, St. Boniface visited the Hessians, and found that, though some of the people had embraced Christianity, there were many who still retained their old heathen practices. There was an oak, sacred to Thor, which was held in great reverence, and which was the centre of the superstitious rites, which, by the advice of some of the Christian converts, St. Boniface determined to cut down. Accordingly—‘*mentis constantia confortatus*’—he began to hew at the gigantic trunk, while the heathen folk stood round, ‘prodigal of their curses,’ but not daring to interfere, and probably believing that their oak would be proof against the power of the axe, and who may have regarded this trial as a proof of the superiority of the one religion over the other. ‘The tree had not been half cut through, when,’ says Wilibald, the biographer of St. Boniface, who was himself present, ‘a supernatural wind shook the great crown of its branches, and it fell with a mighty crash, divided—*quasi superni nutus solatio*—into four equal parts. The heathens,’ he continues, ‘recognised the miracle, and most of them were converted on the spot.’ With the wood of the fallen tree St. Boniface built an oratory upon the spot where it had stood, which he dedicated to St. Peter. Mr. King (in *Sacred Trees*) says that the destruction of the Great Thor’s oak must have been a wise step, for the numerous decrees

and orders set forth in various councils, and mentioned in different Penitentials as late as the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, against such as practised witchcraft, and did heathen ceremonies under great trees and in forests, proves how difficult it was to separate the ancient creeds from such living memorials of it. Nor does the case seem greatly to have been improved when, as frequently occurred among the Celts, especially in Ireland, the tree was appropriated to the great saint of the district. The Irish St. Colman presided over a famous oak-tree, any fragment of which, kept in the mouth, effectually warded off death by hanging—an immunity not to be despised in the land of shillelaghs.* When St. Columba's oak at Kenmare was blown down in a storm, no one dared to touch it, or to apply its wood to ordinary purposes, excepting a certain tanner who cured his leather with the bark. With the leather he made himself a pair of shoes; but the first time he put them on he was struck with leprosy, and remained a leper all his life.

The 6th is St. Norbert's day, the founder of the order of Præmonstratensians; and in Belgium it is said that 'Les bains que prend St. Norbert inondent la terre;' while the 8th is St. Médard, who was Bishop of Noyon 545, or thereabouts, and who is, as I have said before, the French St. Swithin, though there is one English church at Little Bythorn, in Lincolnshire, which is dedicated in his honour. St. Médard ought to be respected, for he was the originator of the Festival of the Rose, at Salency, where he charged his family estate with a sum of money to be given yearly with a crown of roses to the most virtuous girl at Salency. His sister is said to have been the first who claimed it. This ceremony, of which Mr. Baring Gould gives an account, was interrupted by the Revolution, but re-established on a somewhat different footing in 1812, and now takes place every year, the *Rosière* receiving 300 francs, half of which is given by the municipal council, for her good conduct.†

St. Médard's seems an unlucky day to have fixed on for a festival, for there can be very faint hope of having good weather; at Ghent, they certainly prophesy rather after the event when they say, on St. Médard's day it either has rained six weeks before, or will rain six weeks after. A French proverb declares—

'Quand il pleut à S. Médard,
Il pleut quarante jours plus tard.'

And the *Calendrier des bons Laboureurs* also says:—

'Du jour S. Médard en Juin
Le laboureur se donne soin ;

* The oak, the ash, and the elm, were not only sacred trees, but also protected by the old forest laws, which made it death to injure one of them; hence the rhyme—

'The oak, the ash, and the elm tree,
They are hanging all three,
But a branch will set you free.'

(probably an arrow is the 'branch' meant.)

† *Lives of the Saints*, June, p. 80.

Car les anciens disent s'il pleut,
Que trente jours durer il peut ;
Et s'il est beau sois tout certain
D'avoir abondance des grains.'

But fine weather on St. Barnabas, which occurs two days later, will obviate the disaster. There is a third saying, also French, which adds :—

'S'il pleut à la Saint Médard,
La récolte diminue d'un quart.
S'il pleut à la Saint Barnabé (Juin 11)
Elle diminue de moitié ;
Mais s'il fait beau à la Saint Barnabé
Celui-ci lui coupe le bec ou le pied.'

And in England we think—

'If on the eighth June it rain
It fortells a wet harvest, men sain.'

The 9th is St. Faustus, though who this saint was, and when he flourished, I do not know, for I cannot find him mentioned in any of the hagiologies that I have consulted. Any ways, however, St. Faustus said to St. Médard, 'St. Barnabas and Vitus are my good neighbours, and together we will give the country-folks a good washing till Frederic the Hollander (July 18th) comes and closes the doors of heaven.' The 10th June belongs to St. Margaret of Scotland, who was canonized by Pope Innocent IV.,* and is one of our own special saints, though her name has not been embalmed in any English saying. In the Tyrol she is called, Die Wetterfrau, and there there is a saying—

'Regnet es am Margrententage,
Dauert der Regen vierzehn Tage.'

St. Barnabas has the 11th as his day, which is marked in the Clog Almanac with a rake, in order (it is supposed) to denote that this is the beginning of hay harvest. His own emblem is a missionary staff in one hand and the Gospel of St. Matthew in the other, because he is said to have always carried about with him a copy of this Gospel written by St. Matthew himself, from which he preached, and which healed all sick and diseased people who touched it. St. Barnabas' day was formerly a great day with the English people ; for, according to the old style, it was—

'Barnaby bright, Barnaby bright,
The longest day and the shortest night,'†

and was kept accordingly. Churches were decorated with garlands of roses, lavender, rosemary, and woodroof in his honour, this latter plant

* The 10th of June is doubly connected with Scotland, for it was the anniversary of the Old Pretender's birthday, when his adherents used to wear 'the white rose of loyalty in his honour.'

† At the time of the Reformation it was strongly debated whether the festival of St. Barnabas should be admitted into the calendar, and in the second book of King Edward the Conversion of St. Paul is put down in black, and St. Barnabas omitted altogether.

being specially used, as well as mention made of money paid for it in an old church-register, which dates from the time of Edward IV. But St. Barnaby's special flower, according to the old *Rhymed Calendar*, seems to have been the ragged-robin, for—

‘ When St Barnaby bright smiles night and day,
 Poor ragged-robin blooms in the hay ;
 But the scarlet lychnis,* the garden's pride,
 Flames at St. John the Baptist's tyde.’

At Glastonbury too, besides the holy thorn, there grew a miraculous walnut-tree, which never budded forth before St. Barnabas' day, and on his feast shot forth leaves, and flourished like the usual species. Cuttings of St. Barnaby's walnut were so highly valued, that James I. and his wife, Anne of Denmark, are said to have given large sums for them, while the yellow star-thistle was called St. Barnaby's thistle, probably on account of its flowering at this time.

‘ On St. Barnabas, put scythe to the grass,’ tallies with the French ‘ A la Saint Barnabé, la faux au pré,’ and the German ‘ Sanct Barnabas nimmer die Sichel vergass, hat den längsten Tag und das längste Gras ’; while at Brescia, it is said, ‘ If it rains on the morning of St. Barnabas, all the white grapes will be destroyed, and if it rains from morn till night, the white and black will both come to nothing.’

The 13th is St. Antony—‘ Il Santo,’—of Padua, where he is still called in this way. According to Mrs. Jameson, his sermon to the fishes is what chiefly impresses him upon the English mind; for though the plain fact may be that when preaching to some obstinate unbelievers he was heard to say that he might as well preach to the fishes, for they would more readily hear him, yet the legend certainly remains longer by one, and that ran thus: ‘ St. Antony being come to the city of Rimini, where there were many heretics and unbelievers, he preached to them repentance and a new life, but they refused to hear him, and stopped their ears; whereupon he repaired to the sea-shore, and, stretching forth his hand, said, Hear me, ye fishes, for these unbelievers refuse to listen; and truly it was a marvellous thing to see how an infinite number of fishes, great and little, lifted their heads above water and listened attentively to the sermon of the saint.’† I remember seeing a quaint little French engraving, in which this scene was represented, and certainly due justice was done to the fishes by the artist, who depicted them as starting half out of the water in their eagerness to hear.

Next on the list comes St. Vitus, who has an evil notoriety with us on account of the illness that bears his name, and who is further mentioned in the proverb,

‘ If St. Vitus' day be rainy weather,
 It will rain for thirty days together ;’

* Sometimes called Scarlet Lightning, or Candelabrum Ingens S. Johannis.

† *Legends of the Monastic Orders*, p. 280.

while on the Rhine the saying is :—

‘ Sünne Vit
Dann ännert sick de Tiet,
Dann gait dat Lauf in de Egge stahn,
Dann hebbt de Vügel Leggen dahn.”

{St. Vitus' day then the seasons changes, then the leaves are fully out, and the birds have finished laying.) In Poland the nightingale stops singing on St. Vitus' day, while the Russian birds are only a day later, for the birds are silent on St. Tychon's-day (June 16, Gr. Cal.), probably, as Mr. Swainson says, because Tichy is the Russian word for *still*, *quiet*. *A propos* of the nightingale there is a pretty tradition current in the neighbourhood of Stratford-on-Avon, that 'the bird of dawning' only begins to sing on Shakespeare's birthday in that part of the world.

At last we come to the 24th, 'the day of days,' which is kept in all countries alike, so that the difficulty is not so much what to say as what to leave unsaid, for even in Japan, there is a saying that the cat's nose is always cold, except on the day which tallies with our Midsummer-day.

The festival was celebrated by the Church from the most remote period, for St. Augustine says, in the fifth century, 'This day of nativity is handed down to us, and is this day celebrated. We have received this by tradition from our forefathers, and we transmit it to our descendants to be observed with like devotion.' He adds, that the Church usually celebrates the festivals of Saints on the days of their death, but that the feast of St. John the Baptist is excepted from this rule, because this saint was sanctified in his mother's womb. A mystical signification may have attached to the position of this day in the calendar. For in the months of July and December are the solstices; with the first the days decrease, and with the latter they increase. In connection with this the words of the Baptist, 'He must increase, but I must decrease,' acquire a new and fanciful signification. St. Augustine says, 'At the Nativity of Christ the days increase in length, and at that of St. John they decrease. When the Saviour of the world is born the days lengthen, but when the last prophet comes into the world they suffer curtailment.' Nor was the feast of St. John only a Christian festival; like May-day, many heathen practices were grafted on to it, for as Mr. King (*Sacred Trees and Flowers*) points out, 'The Virgin replaced Freyja in the calendar of northern flowers, and so the two white gods of the Valhalla, Baldur and Heimdallr, both of whom represent the sun, were replaced in a similar manner by St. John the Baptist, whose midsummer festival is marked all over Europe by so many remains of solar worship. He is himself called *White St. John* in some old German and Gallic calendars. Flowers with large sun-shaped discs, either white or golden yellow, were dedicated to Baldur as the sun-god, and in this manner the Hypericum became the peculiar property of St. John, and under the name of *Fuga dæmonum* was so powerful in repelling the works of darkness.

‘ Vervain, trefoil, John's wort, dill,
Hinder witches of their will.’

While, when the devil was courting a lady in the guise of a young man, she discovered who he really was by his saying—

‘Gin ye wish to be love of mine
Dooff the St. John’s wort and the vervain.’

The word *Hypericum* comes from two Greek words signifying above twenty, because the leaf of one kind is supposed to have above twenty small holes pierced in it, which may be seen when it is held up to the light, and which are supposed to have been made by the devil with a needle. The root too is marked with red spots, still called ‘Baldur’s blood’ in some parts of Norway, but generally held to be the blood of St. John, and to appear always on the day of his beheading (August 29th). The *hypericum* was also called the Balm of Warrior’s Wound, and the Herb of War, ‘partly because the juice of this plant was supposed to be of great efficacy in curing wounds, and partly on account of the numerous little dots on the leaves, which make them look as though they were pierced through in a thousand places;’ * thus an old poet says :

‘Hypericum was there, that herb of war,
Pierced through with wounds and marked with many a scar;’

and in the days of chivalry, before the knights entered into mortal combat they were required to take oath that neither of them carried about their persons any St. John’s wort, or other herb of power; while in the Tyrol it is thought that if a traveller has St. John’s wort in his shoes he will never be weary.

Googes Naogeorgus tells us of another use to which the St. John’s wort was put:—

‘Then doth the joyful feast of John the Baptist take its turn,
When bonfires great with lofty flowers in every town do burn,
When young men round about with maides do dance in every streete,
With garlands wrought with St. John’s wort or else with vervain sweete,
And many other floweres faire with violets in their handes.
Whereas they all do fondly think that whosoever standes,
And through the flowres beholds the flame, his eyes shall feel no pain.’
When thus till night they daunced have, they through the fire amaine
With striving minds doe runne, and all their hearbes do caste therein.
And then with wordes devout and prayers they solemnly begin,
Desiring God that all their ills may there consumed bee,
Wherebye they thinke through all that yeare from agues to be free.’

Another plant, the orpine, or ‘Midsummer men,’† was used on the eve of St. John by the young girls both in England and Germany to see if their love affairs were likely to be propitious. The plant was stuck on the wall of the bed-room, and if the wall happened to be damp the sprig would most probably retain its freshness, in which case the damsel would be married before the year was out, but if the orpine faded the maiden would fade away too. The strawberry is also connected with St. John’s

* *British Wild Flowers*, Mrs. Loudon, p. 70, second edition.

† Currants in Germany are the *Johannisbeeren*, or berries of St. John, and the glowworm is the *Johanniswürmchen*.

day in a pretty German legend, which tells how the Blessed Virgin goes to pick strawberries with the little children in Paradise on St. John's day. On that day no mother who has lost a child will taste a strawberry, for then her child will get none in Paradise, for the Holy Mary will say, 'Stand behind; your sweet-toothed mother has eaten yours already.'

Mr. Lockhart, in *Ancient Spanish Ballads* gives a translation of an old song for the morning of St. John the Baptist's day, and says that the Spanish damsels (as will be seen in the song) rose on this sacred morning before the sun was up and collected garlands of flowers, which they bound upon their heads, and according as the dew remained upon these a longer or a shorter time, they augured more or less favourably of the constancy of their lovers. Another ceremony was to enclose a wether in a hut of heath and dance and sing round it, while she who desired to have her fortune told stood by the door. If the wether remained still, the omen was good, but if he pushed his horns through the frail roof or door, the lover was false-hearted.

'Come forth, come forth, my maidens, 'tis the day of good St. John,
It is the Baptist's morning that breaks the hills upon.

Come forth, come forth, my maidens, we'll gather myrtle boughs,
And we shall learn from the dews of the fern if our lads will keep their vows.
If the wether be still as we dance on the hill, and the dew hangs sweet on
the flowers,
Then we'll kiss off the dew, for our lovers are true, and the Baptist's blessing
is ours.'

St. John the Baptist's-day was a great festival among the Spanish Moors. We see this in the Spanish ballad of the Admiral Guarenos, which Don Quixote and Sancho Panza overheard a peasant singing as he was going to his work at day-break :—

'On three high feasts they bring him forth a spectacle to be—
The feast of Pasque and the great day of the Nativity,
And on that morn, more solemn yet, when maidens strip the bowers,
And gladden mosque and minaret with the firstlings of the flowers.'

However, we must leave Spain and return to England, for it was on Midsummer-day that the fern-seed was to be gathered, which was to make one walk invisible,* because, according to the legend, an angel told Elizabeth that her child should be born when the fern-seed dropt.†

* 'We have the receipt of fern-seed, we can walk invisible.'—*Henry IV.* Part I. act ii. sc. 1.

† Dr. Jackson, writing prior to 1673, says—'It was my hap to question an ignorant soul (whom by undoubted report I had known to have been seduced by a teacher of unhallowed arts to make a dangerous experiment), what he saw or heard when he watcht the falling of Fern seed at an unseasonable and suspicious hour. "Why," quoth he, "do you think that the devil hath aught to do with that good seed? No, it is in the keeping of the *King of Fayries*, and he I know will do me no harm, although I should watch it again." And having made this answer, he began to pose me thus: "If you are a scholar, and I am none, tell me what said the angel to our Lady, or what conference had our Lady with her cousin Elizabeth concerning the birth of St. John the Baptist?" (as if his intention had been to make

Aubrey gives an account of one who went to gather it (for much discourse hath been about gathering of fern-seed, which is looked upon as a magical herb, on the night of Midsummer eve), 'and the spirits whist by his ears like bullets, and sometimes struck his hat and other parts of his body.' In fine, though he apprehended that he had gotten a great quantity and secured it in paper, and in a box beside, he found all empty. Another way of obtaining the much-desired seed was to shoot at the sun at twelve o'clock at noon on Midsummer-day, and three drops of blood would then fall, which must be preserved, as they are the fern-seed. A third plan was to endeavour to collect the fern-seed on a stormy night, for the seed must be induced to fall into a plate of its own accord, otherwise it will be good for nothing; moreover, all who come near the plant are overcome with sleep and feel themselves repulsed by the fairies who protect the ferns. In the Oberpfalz it is believed that the spring wort, or St. John's wort (Johanni Wurzel) can only be found among the ferns on St. John's night; it is said to be of a yellow colour, and to shine in the night continually like a candle; moreover, it never stands still, but hops about continually to avoid the grasp of men; but if anyone is once lucky enough to seize it and convey it safely home, which is no easy task, then he will be fortunate for the rest of his life.

Midsummer-eve was peculiarly favourable to love-charms, of which the favourite and most generally successful was the dumb-cake, which required

'Two to make it,
Two to bake it,
Two to break it;*

and the third must put it under each of their pillows, but not a word must be spoken during the process, or the spell will be broken; while Mrs. Whitcombe says that in Devon and Cornwall the maidens, when they go to bed on Midsummer-eve, place their shoes in the form of a T, and say—

'I place my shoes like a letter T,
In hopes my true love I shall see
In his apparel and his array
As he is now and every day;'

or else they try their fortune at midnight on the same day. An empty room is chosen, on the floor of which several things, such as a ring, a basin of water, &c., are placed. The damsel is then led blindfold into the room, and the first article she touches reveals her

bystanders believe that he knew somewhat more on this point than was written in such books as I used to read.) How be it, the meaning of his riddle I quickly conceived, and he confessed it to be this, that the angel did foretell John the Baptist should be born at that very instant in which the fern-seed, at other times invisible, should fall (intimating further, as far as I could then see, that this saint of God had some virtue extraordinary from the time or circumstance of his birth.)

* A thimbleful of water, a thimbleful of flour, and a thimbleful of salt, are, I am told, the component parts of this cake.

late. If it is the ring, she will be married; if the water, drowned; and so on. This is also a common practice in Germany on Christmas Eve.

The Irish have an eerie belief that the souls of people on this night leave their bodies and wander on the place, by land or sea, where they shall eventually die; which is, perhaps, the cause of the widespread custom of watching or sitting up all this night, and may be also the origin of the Dutch saying, for anyone who has been kept awake all night by troubles of any sort, 'You have had a John the Baptist's night.' There is also a superstition current in the Levant that the plague is sure to leave the city on that day.

There are plenty of proverbs, both English and foreign, for this time. At Brescia, it is said to rain every year on the eve of St John's-day, while in England we hold, that if it rain on Midsummer-eve there will be no filberts, but there seems a very general opinion that rain on St. John's-day is very bad for the nuts. *The Shepherd's Kalender* says that if Midsummer-day be never so little rainy the hazel and the walnut will be scarce, corn smitten in many places, but apples, pears, and plums will not be hurt. *The Calendrier des bons Laboureurs* is also of the same opinion:—

‘Du jour St. Jean la pluie
Fait la noisette pourrie.’

Moreover,

‘Midsummer rain spoils hay and grain;’

and also

‘Eau de St. Jean ôte le vin, et ne donne point de pain;’

while at Venice, if it rain on St. John's-day there will be a bad growth of millet and reeds. A Sussex proverb declares that for one storm there is before Midsummer-day there will be two after, which is bad, if the Vendée saying is true, ‘Orages avant St. Jean ne sont pas dangereux, Après ils sont violents.’

‘Cut your thistles before St. John,
You will have two instead of one,’

is our last English saying, and the remaining foreign axioms chiefly concern themselves with either the wine, which in Andalusia, up to St. John's-day, is only fit for peasants; or with the cuckoo,

‘Wenn der kukuk nach Johanni singt,
Einen nassen Herbst er uns bringt;’

and at Carinthia, as many days as the cuckoo sings after St. John, so many warm days will there be after Michaelmas.

The 27th belongs to the Seven Sleepers (of Ephesus), to whom belongs the saying, ‘Les sept dormans, Remettent le temps;’ and also ‘Regnets am Tage der sieben Schläfer, regnet es noch sieben Wochen;’ as well as the nursery saying, as applied to a very noisy child, ‘Why, you make noise enough to wake the seven sleepers.’ It appears from the legend

that during the persecution of the Emperor Decius there lived at Ephesus four young men, called Maximian Malchus, Marcian Dionysius, John Serapion, and Constantine, who were Christians, and as they refused to offer sacrifice to the idols, they were accused before the tribunal, whence they fled and hid themselves in a cave. Being discovered, the tyrant ordered the mouth of the cavern to be stopped up in order that they might die of hunger, and they, embracing one another, fell asleep.

In the thirteenth year of the Emperor Theodosius a heresy broke out, which denied the resurrection of the dead. And the Emperor being much afflicted thereat, God took pity upon him, and restored his faith by bringing back these just men to life, which came to pass in this manner: A certain man, who was going to build a stable for his cattle on the top of Mount Coelius, discovered the cavern, and when the light penetrated therein the sleepers awoke, believing that their slumber had only lasted one night: they rose up, and Malchus was sent to the city for food. He, advancing cautiously, beheld to his astonishment the cross surmounting the city gate. He went to another gate, and found another cross. He rubbed his eyes believing himself still asleep, but went boldly into the town, and was more than ever confounded to hear the name of Christ pronounced openly. When he went to the baker's, he offered an ancient coin of the time of the Emperor Decius, and they looked at him with astonishment, thinking that he had found a hidden treasure, and when they accused him he knew not what to reply. Seeing his confusion, they bound him, and dragged him through the streets, till they brought him before the Bishop, and then the truth came out, to the great amazement of all, and the Bishop and all the townsfolk followed him to the cavern, where the other six youths were found. Their faces had the freshness of roses, and a bright light was round their heads; and when the Emperor Theodosius himself came, one of them spoke, and said, 'Believe in us, O Emperor, for we have been raised before the day of judgment, in order that thou mightest trust in the Resurrection of the dead,' and having said this they bowed their heads, and their spirits returned to God. They had slept in the cavern 196 years.

It is curious that only three animals were admitted into Mahomet's paradise, of which Kitmer, the dog of the Seven Sleepers, was one (the other two being Balaam's ass and the camel on which the prophet fled from Mecca). The Mohammedan legend asserts that as the Seven Sleepers were on their way to the cavern in which they intended to take refuge from their heathen persecutor, they passed Kitmer and attempted to drive him away, upon which God caused him to speak, and he said, 'I love those who are dear unto God, go to sleep therefore, and I will guard you; so Kitmer 'stretched forth his forelegs in the mouth of the cave,' and during his sleep of three hundred years turned himself from side to side like his masters, lest their lying so long on the ground should consume their flesh. The descendants of this good creature are still said to

flourish in the East, where the utmost stretch of covetousness is expressed by the saying that the miser 'would not throw a bone to the dog of the Seven Sleepers,' whose names written on letters that have to cross the sea preserve them from miscarriage (*Dogs of Folk Lore*, p. 100). The story of the Seven Sleepers is localized in more than one country. Paul the Deacon asserts that the Seven Sleepers of Germany 'lie in a cave under a lofty rock of the sea-shore. Their dress is Roman, and continues uninjured by time. The arms and hands of one who wished to steal their clothes withered away.'

Last on the list comes the 29th, the day belonging to SS. Peter and Paul, who in many places have a share in the bonfires which were lighted on Midsummer-eve. From their being commemorated on the same day comes the saying 'Robbing Peter to pay Paul,' though as S. Paul has a special day set apart in memory of his conversion, this day is generally looked upon as more peculiarly belonging to S. Peter. S. Peter is generally represented with two, or sometimes three, keys in his hand, which are said to symbolize the keys of heaven, earth, and hell. These keys are alluded to in an old rhyme, which was called the White Pater-noster :—

' St. Peter, St. Peter and his brother,
What have you in one hand ?
Heaven's gate key.
What have you in the other ?
Hell's gate key.
Open one gate, shut the other,
And let every Christian creep under or over.'*

St. Peter is also invoked in the toothache charm, which is still in full force, in the south of England at any rate, and which is generally to be found written on the fly-leaf of the Prayer-book or Bible of the person who makes use of it. 'As Peter sate weeping on a marble stone, Christ came by and said unto him, Peter, what ailest thou? Peter answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God, my tooth acheth. Jesus saith unto him, Arise, Peter, and be thou whole, and not thee only, but all them that carry these lines for my sake shall never have the toothache. Amen, Amen.'

The German charm against fire is somewhat similar :—

' Petrus und Johannes,
Gingen beide wandeln
Petrus nahm den Stab in die Hand,
Damit still ik die den Brand.'

There does not appear to be any English proverb for this day. At Garonne they say, 'S'il pleut la veille de Saint Pierre, la vinée est réduite au tiers ;' while at Dordogne—

' Saint Pierre et Saint Paul,
Lavent les rues de Saint Martiel ;'

* I was told a few years ago, that one of the children, in a little school in Sussex repeated this rhyme every night in place of the 'Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,' which the mistress thought was the right thing for her to say.

and by the Loire, 'St. Pierre pleure toujours.' Moreover, 'On creint le coq de la Saint Pierre, lors qu'il chante il amène le mauvais temps,' but in England it is thought that the cock never crows on S. Peter's-day.

A German proverb says, 'On St. Peter's-day the hare brings forth her young, the cow calves, the hen lays, the good wife cries Well done;' and, moreover, when it thunders they say, 'S. Peter is playing at bowls with the angels;' and when it snows, 'S. Peter is making his bed,' or 'S. Peter rules.' St. Peter is the hero of numerous legends and traditions, of which the following—which is current in Iceland—is a good example :—

'The devil would by no means be less than God, so he tried to make a man. But he was not too successful, for instead of giving his creature a man's shape, he made it the shape of a cat without a skin. S. Peter, however, took pity upon the miserable creature, and gave it a coat, as may be learnt from the ditty :—

'The devil began to make a man,
But only a bare cat came when he tried;
Good help gave Peter, that holy man,
For he clothed the naked cat with a hide.'

Therefore the skin of the cat is the only part of that animal that is of use to man.'

There are two flowers which are connected with S. Peter—the Samphire, which is obviously a corruption of S. Pierre, which is the French name for this plant, and is so called from its love of sea-cliffs; and the Cockscomb,* of which the *Florigelium* says, 'The yellowe floure called the Yellowe Cockescombe, which flor'eth noue in the fieldes, is a sign of S. Peter's-day, whereon it is alwayes in fine floure, in order to admonish us of the denyal of Our Lord by S. Peter, that if even he, the Prince of Apostles, did fall through feare and denied his Lord, so are we faluble creatures the more liable to yeilde to similar tentatiouns.'

B. C. C.

SKETCHES FROM HUNGARIAN HISTORY.

BY SELINA GAYE.

XXXIII.—THE DIET OF HATVAN.

A.D. 1523—A.D. 1525.

For the present Soliman had enough to do in repairing the great losses occasioned to his army by the memorable siege of Rhodes, and in quelling the insurrection which had broken out in Egypt, without engaging in any fresh enterprise; but that he had abandoned his designs against Hungary, no one for a moment believed, and the various incursions made by his Pashas during the summer were generally regarded but as the prelude to the great war which was to be expected. In August, Archbishop Tomory had defeated and slain Ferhad Pasha with the greater part of his 15,000 followers, who had

* Not the great Amaranth, but the *Rhinanthus Crista Galli*, or Yellow Rattle.—Ed.

been devastating Syrmia, and Count Frangepan had led a successful expedition to the relief of Jáicza, raising the siege and capturing not only the whole Turkish camp, but sixty standards besides; and these two victories encouraged the nation to look forward to the future with greater hopefulness. The members of the Council contributed a quantity of silver towards the needful armaments, and a tax in silver was also levied on the royal towns, while the King of England was again entreated to make peace between the Emperor and the King of France, and Pope Clement VII. sent a sum of money to be deposited in Buda until he or his legate should decide on the best way of applying it to the expenses of the Turkish war.

In the meantime the prevailing discontent with the government increased day by day, and threatened at last to break forth in open rebellion. The death of Szathmáry had opened the way for the ambitious Chancellor Szalkay, who speedily exchanged his see of Eger for the Archbishopric of Gran, and at the same time assumed the reins of government which he held in conjunction with Báthory, the Palatine. Szalkay was of low origin, arrogant, violent, covetous, and ambitious, and was hated not without cause by the greater part of the nation as well as by Zápolya; Báthory, on the other hand, was negligent, idle and addicted to drinking. Such were the two men who had forced their way to the head of the Government and now ruled the King, the Council, and the whole Court, with the exception of the spirited young Queen. Policy they had none, for their whole art of government consisted in faction and intrigue, and they were maintained in their places chiefly by the selfishness of certain prelates and magnates, who, in return for their support, were released from all burthens and permitted to enrich themselves at the expense of the public treasury.

The other party in the State consisted chiefly of the lower nobility with Zápolya, whom they looked on as a patriot at their head; and Zápolya took no pains to conceal the fact that he aimed at possessing himself of the chief power, if not of the throne itself. He was hated by most of the magnates for his wealth and position, half feared by the Court for his haughty spirit, and, although not so narrow-minded and full of intrigue as Szalkay, nor so degraded as Báthory, he was after all but a daring oligarch devoid of any nobler ideas, and without the force of character to perform any great actions. His popularity with the nobles rested chiefly on his known hostility to the Government, and this hostility was now further intensified by the death of Ujlaky, and the strife which ensued as to the disposal of his great possessions. Zápolya and his brother claimed to be the Duke's heirs in virtue of the treaty concluded (1493) with their father, and sanctioned, as was asserted, by King Vladislav; but, by Szalkay's advice, the property was now claimed for the Crown, and when the cause was tried in the highest court of justice, before the president Báthory and the chief judge Sárkány, both of them sworn enemies of Zápolya, judgment was of course given in the King's favour.

Everything, in fact, tended towards the outbreak of the violent party-strife which from this time raged in the country, and ended by bringing about the ruin of the State ; but how or in what precise manner it began it is now impossible to say, as there is an unfortunate gap in the historical records of the period, which is very imperfectly supplied by a few isolated documents. It seems, however, that a grand meeting of the Council of State had been held in the spring without any beneficial result to the country, and that this was followed by Szalkay's elevation to the Archbishopric, an occurrence which greatly added to the widespread dissatisfaction felt by all true-hearted men with a Government which summoned the Diet only when it wanted money, and paid not the least attention to the resolutions it passed.

Having, as we may reasonably suppose, tried and failed to improve the state of the country by all the means afforded by legislation, Verböczy and a few others who held public offices in the State, placed themselves at the head of the malcontents, and gave just the impulse it needed to the general agitation. But if their exertions were to meet with any success, they must have a chief whose power and influence would procure them the support of the people, and who so proper for this purpose as Zápolya János, the mighty Vajda of Transylvania, the enemy of the court, the chosen of the nobility ? Under his banner, therefore, they ranged themselves, and from henceforth his cause was deemed to be one with that of the fatherland. It had been determined that all the nobility should be summoned to attend a Diet armed, for the purpose of overthrowing those in power, putting Zápolya in their place, and carrying out all the changes which were considered necessary ; when, just as affairs were in this critical state, the King also found himself obliged to call a meeting of the Diet, in consequence of an attack which the Turks were making upon Szörény ; but for fear the nobility should appear in large numbers, the summons was restricted to a few deputies from each county.

Lajos opened the session by asking for a larger tax for the completion of the flotilla on the Danube and the equipment of the army, and he was followed by the Pope's emissary, who called on the States to do all that lay in their power to resist the Infidel ; and then Lajos, after admonishing them to conduct their deliberations harmoniously, quitted the assembly. No sooner, however, was he gone, than Verböczy arose and described the miserable condition to which the fatherland was reduced in terms so impressive that his audience were completely carried away, and after some violent complaints against the chief officers of State, as well as the Prelates and Magnates, it was resolved that a large Diet should be held the following year at Hatvan, and that all the members should appear fully armed for the purpose of proceeding at once against the enemy : that *permission* should be given for such of the Magnates as had the welfare of the country at heart to attend also and bring their followers with them ; that in the meantime the King should make choice of certain persons to assist him in governing independently of the Council of State ;

that all foreigners should be dismissed from the Court; that Zápolya's claim to the Ujlaky estates should be submitted to the Diet; and finally, by way of propitiating the Catholic powers, from whom help was expected, that all Lutherans should be exterminated.

These resolutions were then submitted to the King, who, without committing himself definitely either to their acceptance or rejection, promised to carry out such as he thought judicious, and to bring the rest before the next Diet for further discussion, hoping by this means to avoid exasperating the nobles, and at the same time to prevent the much-dreaded meeting at Hatvan.

Meantime the beginning of October had brought the melancholy tidings of the fall of Szörény; Zápolya's hatred of the government, and the number of his adherents, had been alike increased by an unjust attempt of Szalkay and the Palatine to fasten the blame of the loss of the fortress upon him as Vajda of Transylvania, and Count Frangepan, the deliverer of Jáicza, had been for ever alienated from the Court party by the refusal of the Priory of Vrána, which he had asked as a reward for his services. Thus, threatened by a terrible foe without, full of dissension within, and still indulging in the vain hope of foreign assistance, Hungary entered upon the year 1525. The German troops promised by the Emperor and the Archduke of Austria, as much for the support of the Court at home as for the war with the Turks, did not make their appearance, for they were required in Italy, where hostilities between Karl and François had broken out afresh; yet still, in spite of the advice of Sigismund of Poland, in spite of the fact that she could not depend on a single ally, Hungary resolved on war for the following year. The Diet, held according to the King's promise in May, was attended by great numbers who came armed, and resolved too not to lay down their arms. A preliminary meeting was held in the Church of St. John, under the presidency of Verböczy, where, under the very eye of the Court, the nobles asked with angry threats, 'Who prevented the execution of last year's resolutions?'

'I can tell if I am asked,' answered Verböczy.

Then followed the most violent reclamations. Szalkay's low origin, his hostility to the nobles, his greed of gain, his profligacy, his utter unworthiness of his high office—all were brought up against him; while Báthory was accused of the loss of Belgrade; Szerencsés, the Jew, of debasing the coinage, and the German courtiers of doing harm to the country.

'This Diet begins ill,' wrote Szalkay the same day to the papal ambassador; 'I don't know what the end of it will be.'

A few days later, the deliberations began on the field of Rákös, and a deputation was sent to the King with a petition that he would favour the nobles with his presence: but Lajos evasively replied that as his negotiations with the Turkish ambassador had proved fruitless, the Sultan might be expected to begin the war during the current year, and therefore the first thing to be discussed was how to make preparations to meet him,

whereupon the States answered that they would tell the King their opinion on the subject the following day, and accordingly, in spite of all efforts to allay the violent excitement produced by his evasive answer, sixty nobles waited upon Lajos, and in the name of the Diet laid before him the following demands :—(1) ‘ All Germans shall be dismissed from the Court within five days, as the Archduke Ferdinand has in like manner dismissed all the Hungarians in the service of his wife Anna ; for,’ said the nobles, ‘ the Germans are Lutherans, but we are good Catholics, and we will have no fellowship with such people ;’ (2) ‘ The Imperial and Venetian ambassadors shall be sent out of the country, the one because he is a mischief-maker, and interferes in the affairs of the State, the other because he is just as likely to be a spy as an ambassador, now that Venice is on friendly terms with the Sultan ;’ (3) ‘ The Royal Council shall be altered in conformity with the resolutions of the last Diet ;’ (4) ‘ Szalkay shall be removed from the chancellorship, and punished for his bad administration, and the accursed Jew, Szerencsés, shall be burnt to death.’

The Diet promised to consider the subject of the war-tax as soon as the King gave his assent to these four propositions ; but on the other hand, it warned him that a refusal might easily lead to the adoption of forcible measures ; and still Lajos temporised and avoided giving a definite answer, and the irritation of the nobles increased day by day, and larger deputations were sent to Buda to press for a decision, and to urge his coming in person to the Diet unattended by either magnates or prelates. He yielded at last, and on making his appearance alone one evening on the field of Rákös, he was received not only with respect, but with acclamations of joy, while Verböczy exhorted him, now that he was in his twentieth year, to take the reins of government in his own hand, and show himself to be such a man as the King of Hungary ought to be ; assuring him, at the same time, that all the nobility would rally round him and give him the support of their willing obedience. Lajos, for his part, promised to consider their demands, and when they escorted him back to Buda in the evening, it really seemed as if each party were desirous of conciliating the other. Unhappily, however, the Magnates would not be conciliated. They refused the invitation of the nobles to take part in the deliberations, and they exercised an evil influence upon Lajos, who postponed his decision from day to day till the time for which the Diet was convened had expired, and then the exasperated nobles separated without voting the special tax asked of them, and firmly resolved to hold a meeting in Hatvan before the summer was over.

The Court was in consternation, and the King issued a circular to the counties warning them not to attend the meeting which had been convoked against his will, reminding them that the nobles could do nothing alone, and that neither he nor the Magnates intended to honour Hatvan with their presence, and adding that he was already taking steps to carry out such laws as he thought beneficial. But the opposite party were not

idle either, and Zápolya by judicious promises and assurances even succeeded in winning over the Queen and Szalkay to his side, and the King, finding that, in spite of his prohibition, the nobles were streaming in large numbers to the Diet, suddenly announced that he intended to comply with their request and go to Hatvan himself. Thither, accordingly, he set out on the 2nd of July, and as he approached the place of assembly on the following day, an army of 14,000 men on horseback came forth to give him a solemn reception. 'These,' said their leader, as he greeted the King, 'are but the fourth part of the nobles who will rally round their sovereign at the first signal, as soon as your majesty takes the government into your own hands in real earnest.'

On the plain where the meeting was to be held a wide space had been enclosed, and on one side of it a stage had been erected for the King, the highest dignitaries, and the foreign ambassadors; the most distinguished nobles took their places within the enclosure, the rest remaining in the space outside, and perfect order was maintained by armed men on foot and on horseback.

As soon as the King had taken his seat, Verböczy began his speech, which lasted for two hours, and was the more effective because he discarded the customary Latin, and spoke in fervent Hungarian. In eloquent, glowing language he spoke of the terrible disorganization which had brought a powerful, blooming kingdom to the verge of ruin; enumerated the fruitless struggles of the nobility to remove the crying evils of the time, and declared that, as every one knew, the fault lay not with their good King, but only with the evil counsellors who had made use of his youthful inexperience to compass their own base ends, it was imperatively necessary that the whole Council and all the Officers of State should be dismissed, and their places filled by men of tried judgment and probity. 'If this be done,' he continued, 'then the nobles will promise to show your majesty that the heroic spirit of their ancestors still lives in them.' Then, turning to the assembled nobles, he asked if he had rightly interpreted their wishes and intentions, and was answered by a thunder of applause from all sides, mingled with cries of entreaty that the King would free himself and them from the tyranny of evil counsellors.

Thereupon, Szalkay arose and called the King to witness that he had resigned the chancellorship on his appointment to the archbishopric, and had again within the last three days prayed to be released from the office, but on each occasion his resignation had been refused by the King. 'However,' he added complacently, 'in a short time his Majesty, as well as the nobility, will recognise the value of my faithful services.'

Zápolya's influence procured him a respectful hearing, and his speech was uninterrupted save by the shout of a few uninitiated or refractory spirits—'We want no cobbler's son to make peasants of us!'

But no such forbearance was shown to Báthory, who blustered in vain, and was haughty and humble by turns, as he declared that it was un-

seemly to depose a State officer thus summarily, and professed himself ready to stand his trial, and, if found guilty, to forfeit not only his office and his property, but his life. Here he was compelled to stop by a storm of shouts, and Artándy, Glepányi, and others, cried, 'There is no need of a trial! We can see with our own eyes that he is not fit for his post; we must choose some more worthy man for our Palatine.'

Scarcely had the uproar somewhat subsided when the chief justice Sárkány ventured to open his mouth and extol the services he had rendered to King and country, modestly asserting that there were not three men equal to him in the whole kingdom.

'Traitor! you lie!' burst forth thousands of voices. 'Has your paltry trade in cattle and hides, your inn-keeping and your wine-selling done better service to the country than we, who have ventured our lives in its defence, while you were taking tolls and oppressing the poor! Nothing but our respect for the King keeps us from cutting you to pieces where you stand!'

After this decided expression of feeling on the part of the assembly Sárkány subsided, and the other officers of State were prudent enough to attempt no answer to the accusations made against them. Soon after the King terminated the sitting by promising to make his decision known on the following day, but still the nobles lingered, greeting with shouts of stormy applause the proposal of their leaders for the immediate deposition of the Palatine. When night closed in, the streets of Hatvan were filled with armed men greatly to the alarm of the Magnates, who even counselled the King to return secretly to Buda. Fortunately he was withheld from following this ruinous advice by Zápolya and Szalkay, who pledged their word for it that he had nothing to fear; but Báthory, Sárkány, and several members of the Council who could take no comfort from such assurances, quitted a place which they had found too hot for them, at midnight. The news of their flight was received with loud rejoicing the next morning, and Sárkány was declared guilty of high treason and deprived of his estates accordingly.

When it came to Báthory's turn to receive sentence a message arrived from the King, forbidding the passing of judgment on anyone who had not been brought to trial, and promising, on his return to Buda, to institute the strictest investigation into the conduct of all whom the Diet accused. Verböczy communicated the message to the nobles, and about three hundred voted for its acceptance, but thousands whom experience had taught to have but little faith in courts of justice, tempestuously demanded the immediate removal of the Palatine. After much discussion and several stormy scenes, four deputies were at last sent to Lajos to obtain his consent to the deposition of Báthory and the election of some one else in his room, and as the King saw that he had no alternative but to give his consent, he despatched three messengers to the Assembly with the desired permission.

It was received with a burst of applause.

'Let us choose one who has no need to learn!' resounded from all sides, 'one who knows the misery of the poor nobles; let us choose Verböczy!' and Verböczy was unanimously proclaimed Palatine.

As deposition and election were the order of the day, the nobles next proceeded to appoint the King's three messengers, Várdy, Bishop of Eger, Drágfy and Kanizsay, to be respectively, Chancellor, Chief-Justice, and Treasurer.

When Lajos appeared the following day in the Assembly accompanied by the Prelates and Magnates, Artándy and Glepányi petitioned him to confirm the elections and particularly to install Verböczy formally in his office.

Verböczy, on the other hand, implored the King and the States to remember his faithful services and not bring misery and contempt upon him by raising him to a post for which he was not fitted; and there is no doubt his entreaty was sincere, for, even were he intellectually qualified for the post, he possessed neither rank nor fortune, he was not loved by the court, was hated by the powerful Magnates, and owing his elevation, as he would do, to the inconstant favour of the fickle multitude, how could he hope to make head against the one party or to satisfy the exaggerated expectations of the other?

Three times he renewed his entreaty, and each time was answered by the shout, 'We will choose no other!'

He had no choice but to yield and submit, according to ancient usage, to be carried on the shoulders of some of the bystanders, and so presented to the King; then he took the oath, was duly shaken hands with by the King and the Magnates, and took his place to the right of the throne between the Papal and Polish ambassadors. By desire of Lajos the new Palatine then read out the resolutions of the Diet, the most noteworthy of which were: that the members of the State Council should be changed, and that their number should be increased by the addition of eight nobles: that such lords as could not maintain at least fifty Hussars should henceforth follow the example of the other nobles and pay over the war-tax levied on their vassals to their respective counties for the support of paid troops to be sent to the frontier according to the directions of the government: Prelates and Magnates should be bound to maintain the full complement of their banderia on the frontier, and the whole of Ujlaky's property should be given to the Count Zápolya. All these resolutions received the royal assent, but, inasmuch as the appointment of all officers of State, with the exception of the Palatine, and the granting of all estates formed part of the royal prerogative, Lajos, supported by Verböczy, firmly refused to ratify the other nominations of the Assembly. But Zápolya and the other leaders having gained the most important points, now showed themselves conciliatory, assured the King they had no wish to encroach on his rights, and granted a tax, the fourth part of which was at first assigned to Verböczy, and on his declining it, was awarded to the Queen for the setting in proper order of her banderium, as was said,

though the real object of such liberality was the gaining of her goodwill, which was important, inasmuch as she ruled both court and King. Maria was yet further conciliated by being allowed to keep her German favourites, and thus ended the much-dreaded Diet of Hatvan, which had been conducted throughout in the most strict and orderly manner and had succeeded in ingratiating itself with both King and Queen.

And yet the results of the Diet were not what had been looked for. The resolutions passed were good in themselves, and if wisely and firmly carried out, might have had a beneficial effect; but unhappily there were many interested in frustrating them, chiefly of course those who had been disgraced at Hatvan, and they were all the bolder in their opposition because Zápolya had withdrawn to Transylvania, where an attack from the Turks was apprehended. They whispered to the King that he had been coerced by the Diet, they talked of the Vajda's extraordinary wealth, declared that Verböczy was only his tool, hinted that he was the real sovereign, and spread a rumour that Lajos would be sure to die in one way or another before long, and that then Zápolya would force the Queen to accept his hand and would ascend the throne. Hatred and mistrust were easily sown by such means as these; Báthory retained as much influence in the council as if he had still been Palatine, and the other officers of State were allowed to keep their places notwithstanding the Diet. As for Verböczy the patriot and lawyer, whose eloquence swayed the popular assemblies, he had neither the power to oppose the haughty Magnates, nor the dexterity to baffle their intrigues; and instead of grasping the reins of government with a firm hand, he busied himself with elaborating his law book, and hoped to make his way at last by winning the favour of the court and comporting himself with deference and complaisance towards the influential grandees.

THE THREE BRIDES.

BY CHARLOTTE M. YONGE.

CHAPTER XXI.

AWFULLY JOLLY.

"When life becomes a spasm,
And history a whiz,
If that is not sensation,
I don't know what it is."

LEWIS CARROLL.

'Is Lady Rosamond at home?'

'No, ma'am.'

'Nor Mrs. Charnock?'

'No, ma'am; they are both gone down to the Rectory.'

'Would you ask whether Mrs. Poyntsett would like to see me?'

'I'll inquire, ma'am, if you will walk in,' said Mr. Jenkins, moved by the wearied and heated looks of Miss Vivian, who had evidently come on foot at the unseasonable visiting hour of 11.15 A.M.

The drawing-room was empty, but, with windows open on the shady side, was most inviting to one who had just become unpleasantly aware that her walking capacity had diminished under the stress of a London season, and that a very hampering one. She was glad of the rest, but it lasted long enough to be lost in the uncomfortable consciousness that hers was too truly a morning call, and she would have risen and escaped had not that been worse.

At last the door of communication opened, and to her amazement Mrs. Poynsett was pushed into the room by her maid in a wheeled chair. 'Yes, my dear,' she said, in reply to Eleonora's exclamation of surprise and congratulation, 'this is my dear daughter's achievement, Rosamond planned and Anne contrived, and they both coaxed "my lazy bones."' "

"I am so very glad! I had no notion I should see you out of your room.'

'Such is one's self-importance! I thought the fame would have reached you, at least.'

'Ah, you don't know how little I see of anyone I can hear from! And now I am afraid I have disturbed you too early.'

'Oh no, my dear; it was very good and kind, and I am only grieved that you had so long to wait; but we will make the most of each other now. You will stay to luncheon?'

'Thank you, indeed I am afraid I must not: papa would not like it, for no one knows where I am.'

'You have taken this long walk in the heat, and are going back! I don't like it, my dear; you look fagged. London has not agreed with you.'

Mrs. Poynsett rang her little hand-bell, and ordered in biscuits and wine, and would have ordered the carriage but for Lenore's urgent entreaties to the contrary, amounting to an admission that she wished her visit to be unnoticed at home. This was hardly settled before there was a knock at the door, announcing the baby's daily visit; and Miss Julia was exhibited by her grandmamma with 'great satisfaction, until another interruption came, in a call from the doctor, who only looked in occasionally, and had fallen on this unfortunate morning.

'Most unlucky,' said Mrs. Poynsett. 'I am afraid you will doubt about coming again, and I have not had one word about our Frankie.'

'He is very well. I saw him at a party the night before we left town. Good-bye, dear Mrs. Poynsett.'

'You will come again?'

'If I can; but the house is to be full of visitors. If I don't, you will know it is because I can't.'

'I shall be thankful for whatever you can give me. I wish I could save you that hot walk in the sun.'

But as Mrs. Poynsett was wheeled into her own room, some compensation befell Eleonora, for she met Julius in the hall, and he offered to drive

her to the gates of Sirenwood in what he called 'our new plaything, the pony carriage,'—on his way to a clerical meeting.

'You are still here?' she said.

'Till Tuesday, when we go to the Rectory to receive the two De Lancey boys for the holidays.'

'How Mrs. Poyndsett will miss you.'

'Anne is a very efficient companion,' said Julius, speaking to her like one of the family; 'the pity is that she will be so entirely lost to us when Miles claims her.'

'Then they still mean to settle in Africa?'

'Her heart has always been there, and her father is in treaty for a farm for him, so I fear there is little hope of keeping them. I can't think what the parish will do without her. By the bye, how does Joe Reynolds get on with his drawings?'

'I must show them to you. He is really very clever. We sent him to the School of Art twice a week, and he has got on wonderfully. I begin to believe in my academician.'

'So you don't repent?'

'I think not. As far as I can judge, he is a good boy still. I make him my escort to church, so that I am sure of him there. Renville would have taken him for a boy about his studio, and I think he will go there eventually; but Camilla thinks he may be an attraction at the bazaar, and is making him draw for it.'

'I was in hopes that the bazaar would have blown over, but the Bishop has been demanding of Fuller and his churchwardens how soon they mean to put the building in hand, and this seems to be their only notion of raising money.'

'I am very glad of this opportunity of asking what you think I had better do about it. Your wife takes no part in it?'

'Certainly not; but I doubt whether that need be a precedent for you. I am answerable for her, and you could hardly keep out of it without making a divided household.'

'I see the difference, and perhaps I have made myself quite unpleasant enough already.'

'As the opposition?'

'And Camilla has been very kind in giving me much more freedom than I expected, and pacifying papa. She let me go every Friday evening to help Lady Susan Strangeways at her mothers' meeting.'

'Lady Susan Strangeways! I have heard of her.'

'She has been my comforter and help all this time. She is all kindness and heartiness,—elbow-deep in everything good. She got up at five o'clock to finish the decorations at St. Maurice's, and to-day she is taking five hundred school children to Windsor forest.'

'Is she the mother of the young man at Backsworth?'

'Yes,' said Eleonora, in rather a different tone. 'Perhaps she goes rather far; and he has flown into the opposite extreme, though they

say he is improving, and has given up the turf, and all that sort of thing.'

'Was he at home? I heard he was on leave.'

'He was said to be at home, but I hardly ever saw him. He was always out with his own friends when I was there.'

'I should not suppose Lady Susan's pursuits were much in his line. Is not one of the daughters a Sister?'

'Yes, at St. Faith's. She was my great friend. The younger ones are nice girls, but have not much in them. Camilla is going to have them down for the bazaar.'

'What, do they patronize bazaars?'

'Everything that is *doing* they patronize. I have known them be everywhere, from the Drawing-room to a Guild-meeting in a back slum, and all with equal appetite. That is one reason why I fear I shall not see much of your mother; they are never tired, and I shall never get out alone. The house is to be full of people, and we are to be very gay.'

She spoke with a tone that betrayed how little pleasure she expected, though it strove to be uncomplaining; and Julius, who had learnt something of poor Frank's state of jealous misery, heartily wished the Strangers family further, regarding the intimacy as a manœuvre of Lady Tyrrell's, and doubting how far all Eleonora's evident struggles would keep her out of the net; and though while talking to her he had not the slightest doubt of her sincerity, he had not long set her down at the lodge before he remembered that she was a Vivian.

Meantime Rosamond, carrying some medicament to old Betty Reynolds, found the whole clan in excitement at the appearance of Joe in all his buttons, looking quite as honest and innocent, though a good deal more civilized, than when he was first discovered among the swine.

'Only to think,' said his great-grandmother, 'that up in London all they could gie to he was a bad penny.'

'It is the bronze medal, my lady,' said Joshua, with a blush; 'the second prize for crayons in our section.'

'Indeed,' cried Rosamond. 'You are a genius, Joe, worthy of your namesake. There are many that would be proud to have the grandson you have, Betty.'

'Tubby sure,' added an aunt-in-law, 'tis cheap come by. Such things to make a young lad draught. They ought to be ashamed of themselves, they did oughter. Shut it up, Josh, don't be showing it to the lady—'tis nothing but the bare back of a sweep.'

'My Lady and Miss Vivian have seen it,' said Joshua, blushing. 'Tis torso, my lady, from a cast from the museum.'

'A black-looking draught,' repeated the grandmother. 'I tells Joe, if he drawed like King Geearge's head up at Wilsbro' on the sign, with cheeks like apples, and a gould crown a-top, he'd arn his bread.'

'All in good time, Betty. He can't colour till he can draw. I'm glad to see him looking so well.'

‘Yes, my Lady, he do have his health torrablish, though he lives in a underground sort of a place; and they fine servants puts upon he shameful.’

‘Granny!’ muttered Joshua, in expostulation.

‘He’s a brave boy, and does not mind roughing it so he can get on,’ said Rosamond.

‘And the ladies are very good to me,’ said the boy.

‘Show Lady Rosamond the draught you did of Miss Vivian, like a hangel,’ suggested the aunt.

The rising artist coloured, saying, ‘Please, my Lady, don’t name it to no one. I would not have shown it, but little Bess, she pulled down all my things on the floor when I was not looking. It is from memory, my Lady, as she looks when she’s doing anything for Sir Harry.’

It was a very lovely sketch—imperfect, but full of genius, and wonderfully catching the tender wistful look which was often on Eleonora’s face as she waited on her father. Rosamond longed that Frank should see it; but the page was very shy about it, and his grandmother contrasted it with the performances of the painter ‘who had draughted all the farmers’ wives in gould frames for five pound a head; but satin gownds and gould chains was extry.’

But Joe had brought her a pound of tea, and an ‘image’ for her mantel-piece, which quite satisfied her, though the image, being a Parian angel of Thorwaldsen’s, better suited his taste than its surroundings.

The whole scene served Rosamond for a narrative in her most lively style for Mrs. Poyndsett’s amusement that evening. There was the further excitement of a letter from Miles, and the assurance that he would be at home in November. Anne had become far less chary of communications from his letters than she had at first been, but of this one she kept back so large a portion in public, that the instant Mrs. Poyndsett had bidden them good-night and been wheeled away, Rosamond put a hand on each shoulder, and looking into her face, said, ‘Now, Anne, let us hear! Miles has found Archie Douglas. It is no use pretending. Fie, Mrs. Anne, why can’t you tell me!’

‘I was not to tell anyone but Julius.’

‘Well, I’m Julius. Besides, wasn’t I at the very bottom of the tracing him out? Haven’t I the best right to know whether it is bad or good?’

‘Not bad, I am sure,’ said Julius, quickly and anxiously.

‘Oh no, not bad,’ answered Anne. ‘He has seen him—had him on board for a night.’

‘Where?’

‘Off Durban. But this whole sheet about it is marked “Private—only for Julius,” so I could say nothing about it before your mother. I have hardly glanced at it myself as yet, but I think he says Mr. Douglas made him promise not to tell her, or Joanna Bowater.’

‘Not tell Jenny!’ cried Rosamond. ‘And you said it was not bad. He must have gone and married!’

‘I do not think that is it,’ said Anne; ‘but you shall hear. Miles says :—
“I have at last seen our poor cousin Archie. I told you I was following up your brother Sandie’s hint about the agents for the hunters ; and at last I fell in with a merchant, who, on my inquiry, showed me an invoice that I could have sworn to as in Archie’s hand, and described his white hair. It seems he has been acting as manager on an ostrich farm for the last three years, far up the country. So I lost no time in sending up a note to him, telling him, if he had not forgotten old times, to come down and see me while I was lying off Durban Bay. I heard no more for ten days, and had got in the stores and was to sail the next day, thinking he had given us all up, when a boat hailed us just come over the bar. I saw Archie’s white head, and in ten minutes I had him on deck. ‘For heaven’s sake—am I cleared, Miles?’ was the first thing he said ; and when I could not say that he was, it went to my heart to see how the eager look sank away, and he was like a worn-down man of fifty. Poor fellow, I found he had ridden two hundred miles, with the hope that I had brought him news that his innocence was proved, and the revulsion was almost more than he could bear. You see, he had no notion that we thought him dead, and so he took the entire absence of any effort to trace him as acquiescence in his guilt ; and when he found out how it was, he laid me under the strongest injunctions to disclose to no one that he is living—not that he fears any results, but that he says it would only disturb everyone and make them wretched——”’

‘He must have gone and married. The wretch !’ broke in Rosamond.

‘No, oh no !’ cried Anne. ‘Only hear the rest. “I told him that I could not see that at all, and that there was a very warm and tender remembrance of him among us all, and he nearly broke down, and said, ‘For heaven’s sake then, Miles, let them rest in that ! There’s more peace for them so.’ I suppose I looked—I am sure I did not speak—as though I were a little staggered as to whether he were ashamed to be known ; for he drew himself up in the old way I should have known anywhere, and told me there was no reason I should fear to shake hands with him ; however his name might be blasted at home, he had done nothing to make himself unworthy of his mother and Jenny—and there was a sob again. So I let him know that up to my last letters from home Jenny was unmarried. I even remembered those descriptive words of yours, Nannie, ‘living in patient peacefulness and cheerfulness on his memory.’

“I was called on deck just then, so I gave him my home photograph-book, and left him with it. I found him crying like a child over it when I came back ; I was obliged to strip it of all my best for him, for I could not move him. We went through the whole of the old story, to see if there were any hope ; and when he found that Tom Vivian was dead, and George Proudfoot too, without a word about him, he seemed to think it hopeless. He believes that Proudfoot at least, if not Moy, were deeply in debt to Vivian, though not to that extent, and that Vivian probably incited them to ‘borrow,’ from my mother’s letter. He was very likely

to undertake to get the draft cashed for them, and not to account for the difference. It may have helped to hasten his catastrophe. Moy, I never should have suspected; Archie says he should once have done so as little; but he was a plausible fellow, and would do things on the sly, while all along appearing to old Proudfoot as a mentor to George. Archie seemed to feel his prosperity the bitterest pill of all—reigning like one of the squirearchy at Proudfoot Lawn—a magistrate forsooth, with his daughter figuring as an heiress. One thing worth note, Archie says, that when it was too late, he remembered that the under-clerk, Gadley, might not have gone home, and might have heard him explain that the letter had turned up.”

‘Gadley? Why that’s the landlord of the “Three Pigeons!” exclaimed Rosamond. ‘It is Mr. Moy’s house, and he supports him through thick and thin.’

‘Yes,’ said Julius, ‘the magistrates have been on the point of taking away his licence, but Moy always stands up for him. There is something suspicious in that.’

‘I heard Miss Moy, with my own ears, tell Mrs. Duncombe that he was the apple of her father’s eye,’ cried Rosamond.

‘He’s bribed! he’s bribed! Oh, I see it all! Well, go on, Anne. If Archie isn’t at home before he is a year older——’

Anne went on. ‘“He allowed that he would have done more wisely in facing it out and standing his trial; but he said, poor fellow, that he felt as if the earth had given way under him. There was not a soul near who believed him; they brought up his father’s history against him, and moreover, he had been at the races, and had been betting, though in fact he had won and not lost, and the 20% he had become possessed of was his capital, besides the little he could draw out of the bank.

‘“If he could only have seen Jenny in London, she would have turned him back. Indeed, that first stage was to consult her, but he fancied he saw the face of the Wilsbro’ Superintendent in a cab, and the instinct of avoiding arrest carried him to Southampton, where he got a steerage berth in a sailing vessel, and came out to the Cape. He has lived hard enough, but his Scots blood has stood him in good stead, and he has made something as an ivory-hunter, and now has a partnership in an ostrich farm in the Amatongula country. Still he held to it that it was better he should continue dead to all here, since Mr. Bowater would never forgive him; and the knowledge of his existence would only hinder Jenny’s happiness. You should have seen the struggle with which he said that! He left me no choice, indeed; forbade a word to anyone, until I suggested that I had a wife, and that my said wife and Julius had put me on the scent. He was immensely struck to find that my sweet Nan came from Glen Fraser. He said the evenings he spent there had done more to renew his homesickness, and make him half mad after the sight or sound of us, than anything else had done, and I got him to promise to come and see us when we are settled in the bush.

What should you say to joining him in ostrich-hatching? or would it be ministering too much to the vanities of the world? However, I'll do something to get him cleared, if it comes to an appeal to old Moy himself, when I come home. Meantime, remember, you are not at liberty to speak a word of this to anyone but Julius, and, I suppose, his wife. I hope——" There, Rose, I beg your pardon.'

'What does he hope?' asked Rosamond.

'He only hopes she is a cautious woman.'

'As cautious as his Nan, eh? Ah, Anne! you're a canny Scot, and maybe think holding your tongue as fine a thing as this Archie does; but I can't bear it. I think it is shocking, just wearing out the heart of the best and sweetest girl in the world.'

'At any rate,' said Julius, 'we must be silent. We have no right to speak, however we may feel.'

'You don't expect it will stay a secret, or that he'll go and pluck ostriches like geese, with Miles and Anne, and nobody know it? 'Twould be taking example by their ostriches, indeed!'

'I think so,' said Julius, laughing; 'but as it stands now, silence is our duty by both Miles and Archie, and Anne herself. We must not make her repent having told us.'

'It's lucky I'm not likely to fall in with Jenny just yet,' said Rosamond. 'Don't leave me alone with her, either of you; if you do, it is at your peril. It is all very well to talk of honour and secrets, but to see the look in her eyes, and know he is alive, seems to me rank cruelty and heartlessness. It is all to let Miles have the pleasure of telling when he comes home.'

'Miles is not a woman, nor an Irishwoman,' said Julius.

'But he's a sailor, and he's got a feeling heart,' said Rosamond; 'and if he stands one look of Jenny, why, I'll disown him for the brother-in-law I take him for. By the bye, is not Raymond to know?'

'No,' said Anne; 'here is a postscript forbidding my telling him or Mrs. Poyntsett.'

'Indeed! And I suppose Herbert knows nothing?'

'Nothing. He was a boy at school at the time. Say nothing to him, Rose.'

'Oh no: besides, his brain is all run to cricket.'

It was but too true. When the sun shone bright in April, and the wickets were set up, Herbert had demonstrated that his influence was a necessity on the village green; and it was true that his goodly and animated presence was as useful morally to the eleven as it was conducive to their triumphs: so his Rector suppressed a few sighs at the frequency of the practices, and the endless matches. Compton had played Wilsbro' and Strawyers, Duddingstone and Woodbury: the choir had played the school, the single the married, and when hay and harvest absorbed the rustic eleven, challenges began among their betters. The officers played the county—Oxonians, Cantabs, Etonians, Harrovians—and wherever a match

was proclaimed that prime bowler, the Reverend Herbert Bowater, was claimed as the indispensable champion of his cause and country.

If his sister had any power to moderate his zeal, she had had little chance of exercising it; for Mrs. Bowater had had a rheumatic fever in March, and continued so much of an invalid all the summer, that Jenny seldom went far from home, only saw her brother on his weekly visits to the sick-room, and was, as Rosamond said, unlikely to become a temptation to the warm heart and eager tongue.

The week-day congregation were surprised one August morning at eight o'clock, by the entrance of three ladies in the most recent style of fashionable simplicity, and making the most demonstrative tokens of reverence. As the Rector came out he was seized upon at once by the elder lady.

'Mr. Charnock! I must introduce myself; I knew your dear mother so well when we were both girls. I am so delighted to find such a church—quite an oasis; and I want to ascertain the best hour for calling on her. Quite an invalid—I was so shocked to hear it. Will the afternoon suit her? I am only here for three days to deposit these two girls, while I take the other on a round of visits. Three daughters are too great an infliction for one's friends, and Bee and Conny are so delighted to be near their brother and with dear Lena Vivian, that I am very glad above all, since I find there are real church privileges—so different from the Vicar of Wilsbro'. Poor man; he is a great trial.'

All this was said between the church and the lychgate, and almost took Julius's breath away; but Mrs. Poyndsett was prepared to welcome her old friend with some warmth and more curiosity.

Lady Susan Strangeways was a high-bred woman, but even high breeding could not prevent her from being overwhelming, especially as there was a great deal more of her than there had been at the last meeting of the friends, so that she was suggestive of Hawthorne's inquiry, whether a man is bound to so many more pounds of flesh than he originally wedded. However, it was prime condition, and activity was not impeded, but rather received impetus. She had already, since her matutinal walk of more than a mile and back, overhauled the stores for the bazaar, inspected the town-hall, given her advice, walked through the ruins for the church, expressed herself strongly on the horrors of the plan, and begun to organize shilling cards, all before Sir Harry had emerged from his room.

She was most warm-hearted and good-natured, and tears glistened in her honest grey eyes, as she saw her old friend's helpless state. 'You don't know how much I have improved,' said Mrs. Poyndsett; 'I feel quite at liberty in this chair, all owing to my good daughters-in-law.'

'Ah! I have so pitied you for having no girls! My dear daughters have been so entirely one with me—such a blessing in all I have gone through.'

Mrs. Poynsett of course declared her complete comfort in her five sons, but Lady Susan was sure that if she had had as many boys, instead of one son and four daughters, she should have been worn out. Lorimer was a dear, affectionate fellow. Those he loved could guide him with a leash of gossamer, but young men in his position were exposed to so many temptations ! There ensued a little sighing over the evils of wealth ; and to see and hear the two ladies no one would have thought that Julia Poynsett had married a young man for love—Susan Lorimer an old man for an independence.

Possibly with her present principles she would not have done so ; but through the vista of a long and prosperous widowhood, deficiencies in the courtship were easily forgotten ; and perhaps there was the more romance and sentiment now because she had been balked of it in her youth. She had freely allowed her eldest daughter to enter a sisterhood from the purest, most unselfish motives, but there was compensation in talking of her Margaret as a Sister of Mercy.

And ere long she was anxiously inquiring Mrs. Poynsett's opinion of Eleonora Vivian, and making confidences somewhat trying to the mother of the young lady's ardent lover.

She was quite aware that as to fortune there could hardly be a worse match than Miss Vivian ; but she was sensible enough to see that her son had a sufficiency, and generous enough to like the idea of redeeming the old estate. Her husband had spent his latter years in a vain search for a faultless property, and his wealth was waiting for Lorimer's settling down. She had always regretted the having no vassals rightfully her own, and had felt the disadvantages of being Lady Bountiful only by tenant right. To save an old estate from entirely passing out of a family, and relieve 'a noble old wreck,' like Sir Harry, seemed to her so grand a prospect that she could not but cast a little glamour over the manner of the shipwreck. Still, to do her justice, her primary consideration was the blessing such a woman as Lenore might be to her son.

She had not fathomed Lady Tyrrell. No woman could do so without knowing her antecedents, but she understood enough to perceive that Eleonora was not happy with her, and this she attributed to the girl's deep nature and religious aspirations. Rockpier was an ecclesiastical paradise to Lady Susan, and a close bond with Lenore, to whom in London she had given all the facilities that lay in her power for persevering in the observances that were alien to the gay household at home. She valued this constancy exceedingly, and enthusiastically dilated on the young lady's goodness and indifference to the 'sensation she had created. 'Lorimer allows he never saw her equal for grace and dignity.'

Allows ! Fancy Frank *allowing* any perfection in his Lenore ! Was it not possible that a little passing encomium on unusual beauty was being promoted and magnified by the mother into a serious attachment ? But Lady Tyrrell was playing into her hands, and Lenore's ecclesiastical proclivities were throwing her into the arms of the family !

It hardly seemed fair to feign sympathy, yet any adverse hint would be treason, and Mrs. Poyndsett only asked innocently whether her friend had seen her son Frank.

‘Oh yes, often ; the handsomest of all your sons, is he not ?’

‘Perhaps he is *now*.’

‘My girls rave about his beautiful brown eyes, just as you used to do, Julia, five-and-thirty years ago.’

Mrs. Poyndsett was sure that whatever she had thought of Miles Charnock’s eyes five-and-thirty years ago, she had never raved about them to Susan Lorimer, but she only said, ‘All my boys are like their father except Charlie.’

‘But Master Frank has no eyes for anyone but Miss Vivian. Oh yes, I see the little jealousies ; I am sorry for him ; but you see it would be a shocking bad thing for a younger son like him ; whereas Lory could afford it, and it would be the making of him.’

Mrs. Poyndsett held her peace, and was not sorry that her visitor was called away while she was still deliberating whether to give a hint of the state of the case.

Lady Susan was, however, more aware of it than she knew ; Lady Tyrrell had ‘candidly’ given her a hint that there had been ‘some nonsense about Frank Charnock,’ but that he could never afford such a marriage, even if his mother would allow it, which she never would. Besides, he had not fallen into a satisfactory set in London—why, it was not needful to tell.

When, after the drive, Lady Tyrrell, fairly tired out by her visitor’s unfailing conversation and superabundant energy, had gone to lie down and recruit for the evening, Lady Susan pressed on Eleonora a warm invitation to the house in Yorkshire which she was renting, and where Lorimer would get as much shooting as his colonel would permit. The mention of him made Lenore blush to the ears, and say, ‘Dear Lady Susan, you are always so kind to me that I ought to be open with you. Don’t fancy—’

‘I understand, I understand, my dear,’ broke in Lady Susan. ‘You shall not be teased. Do not the girls and I care for you for your own sake ?’

‘I hope so.’

The elder lady sprang up and embraced her. Affection was very pleasant to the reserved nature that could do so little to evoke caresses. Yet Eleonora clasped her Rockpier charm in her hand, and added, ‘I must tell you, that so far as I can, without disobedience, I hold myself engaged to Frank Charnock.’

‘To Frank Charnock ?’ repeated Lady Susan, startled at this positive statement. ‘My dear, are you quite sure of his ways ?—since he has been in town I mean.’

‘I know him, and I trust him.’

‘I’m sure he is a fine-looking young man, and very clever, they say ;

dear Julia Poyndsett's son too, and they have all turned out so well,' said honest Lady Susan; 'but though you have been used to it all your life, my dear, a taste for horses is very dangerous in a young man who can't afford to lose now and then, you know.'

'I have seriously made up my mind never to marry a man who has anything to do with the turf,' said Eleonora.

'Ah, my poor dear, I can understand that,' said Lady Susan, aware how ill this told for her Lory. 'May I ask, does he know it?'

'It would insult him to say it. None of the Charnocks ever meddle with those things. Ah! I know your son saw him on the Derby-day; but he went down with his eldest brother and his wife—and *that* is a very different thing! I stayed at home, you remember—papa had a fit of the gout.'

'My dear, I don't want to accuse him. Don't bristle up; only I am sorry, both for my own little plan of having you for my *very* own, and because I fear there is trouble in store for you. It can't be palatable.' Here Eleonora shook her head, and her worn, wearied look went to the good-natured heart.

'Dear child, you have gone through a great deal. You shan't be worried or fretted about anybody or anything at Revelrig.'

'I should be very glad,' said Lenore, who had no fears of Lory personally, though she could not be invited on false pretences.

'You had better come when Bee and Conny meet me. Let me see—will the retreat be over by that time? Are you going to it? You are an associate of St. Faith.'

'Yes, but I don't see how I could go to the retreat. Oh, what a relief it would be to have such a week!'

'Exactly what I feel,' said Lady Susan, somewhat to her surprise. 'It strengthens and sets me right for the year. Dr. Easterby conducts this one. Do you not know him? Is not Rood House near Backsworth?'

'Yes, on the other side, but he is utterly out of my reach. Julius Charnock looks up to him so much; but his name—even more than St. Faith's—would horrify my father.'

'You could not go direct there,' said Lady Susan; 'but when once you are with me you are my charge, and I could take you.'

She considered a little. Both she and her friend knew that all her religious habits were alien to Sir Harry, and that what he had freely permitted, sometimes shared, at Rockpier, was now only winked at, and that if he had guessed the full extent of her observances he would have stormily issued a prohibition.

Could it be wrong to spend part of her visit to Lady Susan with her hostess in a sisterhood, when she had no doubt as to attending services which he absolutely never dreamt of, and therefore did not forbid? The sacred atmosphere and holy meditations, without external strife and constant watchfulness, seemed to the poor girl like water to the thirsty; and she thought, after all the harass and whirl of the bazaar and race

week, she might thus recruit her much-needed strength for the decisive conflicts her majority would bring.

Lady Susan had no doubts. The 'grand old wreck' was in his present aspect a hoary old persecutor, and charming Lady Tyrrell a worldly scheming elder sister. It was as much an act of charity to give their victim an opportunity of devotion and support as if she had been the child of abandoned parents in a back court in East London. Reserve to prevent a prohibition was not in such cases treachery or disobedience; and she felt herself doing a mother's part as she told her daughters with some enjoyment of the mystery. Eleanora made no promise, hoping to clear her mind by consideration or to get Julius's opinion. He and his wife dined at Sirenwood, and found Joe Reynolds's drawings laid out for inspection, while Lady Susan was advising that, instead of selling them, there should be an industrial exhibition of all curiosities of art and nature to be collected in the neighbourhood, and promising her own set of foreign photographs and coloured costumes, which had served such purposes many and many a time.

After dinner, the good dame tried to talk to Rosamond on what she deemed the most congenial subjects; but my Lady Rose had no notion of 'shop' at a dinner-party, so she made languid answer that she 'left all that to the curates,' and escaped to a frivolous young matron on the other side of the room, looking on while her husband was penned in, and examined on his services, and his choir, and his system, and his decorations, and his classes, and his schools, for all or any of which Lady Susan pressed on him the aid of the two daughters she was leaving at Sirenwood; and on his hint that this was beyond his parish, she repeated her strong disapproval of the vicar of Wilsbro', whom she had met at dinner the night before, and besides the school there had numerous Sunday teachers.

Julius assented, for he had no redundancy of the article, and his senior curate had just started on a vacation ramble with a brother; but a sort of misgiving crossed him as he heard Herbert Bowater's last comic song pealing out, and beheld the pleasingly plain face of a Miss Strangeways on either side of him.

Had he not fought the Eton and Harrow match over again with one of them at dinner; and had not a lawn tennis challenge already passed?

For Lady Tyrrell and Mrs. Charnock Poyntsett were to have garden-parties on alternate Wednesdays, and the whole neighbourhood soon followed suit.

'You'll find nobody at home, Jenny,' said Julius, coming out of a cottage opposite, as she rode up to Mrs. Hornblower's, on one of the last days of August. 'Nobody—that is, but my mother. Can you come up and see her?'

'With all my heart; but I must get down here; I'm sent for one of Herbert's shirts. The good boy lets mamma and aunty manage them still! I believe their hearts would break outright if he took to shop ones like the rest of them. Hush Tartar, for shame! don't you know me? Where's your master?'

‘At a garden-party at Duddingstone. Your mother is better I see.’

‘Yes, thank you—out driving with papa. Good Rollo!’ as the dignified animal rose from the hearth-rug to greet her, waving his handsome tail, and calmly expelled a large tabby cat from the easy-chair, to make room for his friends. ‘Well done, old Roll! Fancy a cat in such company.’

‘Herbert’s dogs partake his good-nature.’

‘Mungo seems to be absent too.’

‘Gone with him no doubt. He is the great favourite with one of the Miss Strangeways.’

‘Which—Herbert or Mungo?’

‘Both! I might say, I know the young ladies best by one being rapturous about Tartar and the other about Mungo. Rollo treats both with equally sublime and indifferent politeness, rather as Raymond does.’

‘What sort of girls are they? Herbert calls them “awfully jolly.”’

‘I’m sorry to say I never can think of any other epithet for them. For once it is really descriptive.’

‘Is it either of them in particular?’

‘Confess, Joan, that’s what brought you over.’

‘Perhaps so. Edith heard some nonsense at Backsworth, and mamma could not rest till she had sent me over to see about it; but would there be any great harm in it if it were true? Is not Lady Susan a super-excellent woman?’

‘You’ve hit it again, Jenny. Couple the two descriptions.’

‘I gather that you don’t think the danger great.’

‘Not at present. The fascination is dual, and is at least a counteraction to the great enchantress.’

‘That is well! It was not wholesome!’

‘Whereas, these two are hearty, honest, well-principled girls, quite genuine.’

‘Yet, you don’t say it with all your heart.’

‘I own I should like to find something they had left undone.’

‘What, to reduce them to human nature’s daily food?’

‘There’s just no escaping them. There they are at matins and even-song.’

‘How shocking! What, gossip afterwards?’

‘Ask Rollo, whether Mungo and Tartar don’t stand at the lychgate, and if he finds it easy to put an end to the game at play.’

‘Oh! and he said they never missed a Sunday service, or the school. Do they distract him?’

‘Whom would it not distract to see two figures walking in with bunches on their backs like camels, and high-heeled shoes, and hats on the back of their heads, and chains and things clattering all over them?’

‘Aren’t they lady-like?’

‘Oh! they are quite that. Rose says it is all the pink of fashion—only coming it strong—I declare they are infectious!’

'I believe so. I never heard so many nibbles at slang from any of you five, as from the rector of Compton in the last five minutes. I gather that he is slightly bothered.'

'There's so much of it. We are forced to have them to all the meals on Sunday, and their lectures on functions have nearly scared poor Anne to the Pilgrim level again. They have set upon me to get up a choir-concert and a harvest-feast; but happily no one has time for the first at this season, and as to the other, I doubted whether to make this first start after such a rainy summer, and they decide me against it. To have them decorating the church!'

'Awfully jolly,' suggested Jenny.

'Even so. They are, if you understand me, technically reverent; they have startled the whole place with their curtsies and crossings in church; but they gabble up to the very porch; and the familiarity with which they discuss High Mass, as they are pleased to call it! I was obliged to silence them, and I must say they took it nicely.'

'How do they suit Lena?'

'She likes them. Lady Susan was a great help to her in London, and she feels the comfort of their honesty. They brought her to church with them one or two mornings, but it knocked her up to walk so early. Insensibly, I think, they do Lady Tyrrell's work in shutting her up from any of us.'

'Spite of croquet, which seems perpetual.'

'Chronic and sporadic parties make it so. There are few days without that or something else. Cricket or the band at the barracks.'

'People say the neighbourhood has never been so gay since Camilla Vivian's marriage. I sometimes wonder whether anything can be going to happen,' said Jenny with a sigh, not guessing at what Julius was thinking of; then changing her tone: 'Surely Herbert does not go to it all, and leave you alone? O Julius! you should not let him.'

'Never mind, Jenny, there's no more work now in the holidays than I am sufficient for; and for him, it is quite as guileless play as ever he had twenty years ago. It will soon be over, or I should take it more seriously.'

'But it is at such a time!'

'Yes, that is the worst of it. I have thought it over; but while he is in this mood, the making him feel victimised and interfered with has a worse effect than the letting him have his swing.'

'What is he doing now, I wonder. Here's his sermon-paper on the table, and a Greek Testament, and "Hints on Decorating Churches," with "Constance Strangeways," in the first leaf—no other book. How long will this saturnalia last?'

'Up to the Ordination, I fear. You know the good people have contrived to put bazaar, races, and ball, all into the Ember Week, and they are the great object of the young ladies' visit. Could you have him home for a quiet week first?'

‘It would not be a quiet week ; Edith is in the way of most of these affairs ; besides, to open fire about these young ladies might just be putting nonsense into an innocent head. Now, I’ve not seen your Rectory !’

The said Rectory was in a decided state of fresh, not to say raw, novelty outside, though the old trees and garden a little softened its hard greys and strong reds ; but it promised to look well when crumbling and weather stain had done their work. At the door they met the pretty young nurse, with a delicate sea-green embroidered cashmere-bundle in her arms.

‘Little Lady Green Mantle,’ exclaimed Jenny.

‘Erin-go-bragh,’ said Julius. ‘Rose clung to her colours in spite of all predictions about “the good people” asleep of course,”’ as Jenny took her and uncovered her face. ‘She won’t exhibit her eyes, but they are quite *proper* coloured.’

‘Yes, I see she is like Raymond !’

‘Do you ? They all say she is a perfect Charnock, though how they know I can’t guess. There,’ after a little more baby-worship, ‘you may take her, Emma.’

‘Is that the under-nurse ?’ asked Jenny, rather surprised by her juvenility.

‘The sole one. My mother and Susan are rather concerned, but Rose asserts that experience in that department is always associated with gin ; and she fell in love with this girl—a daughter of John Gadley’s, who is much more respectable than he of the “Three Pigeons.” I suppose it is not in the nature of things for two women to have the same view of nursery matters, unless one have brought up the other.’

‘Or even if she have. Witness mamma’s sighs over Mary’s nurses.’

‘I thought it was the common lot. You’ve not seen the dining-room.’ And the full honours were done. They were pleasant rooms, still unpapered, and the furniture, chiefly of amber-coloured varnished deal ; the drawing-room, chiefly with green furniture, with only a few brighter dashes here and there, and a sociable amount of comfortable litter already. The study was full of new shelves and old books, and across the window-sill lay a grey figure, with a book and a sheet of paper.

‘You here, Terry, I thought you were gone with Rose,’ said Julius, as the boy rose to greet Miss Bowater.

‘She said I need not, and I hate those garden-parties,’ said Terry ; and they relieved him of their presence as soon as Jenny had paid her respects to the favourite prints and photographs on the walls.

‘He has a passion for the history of Poland just now,’ said Julius. ‘Sobieski is better company than he would meet at Duddingstone, I suspect—poor fellow ! Lord Rathforlane has been so much excited by hearing of Driver’s successes as a coach, as to desire Terry to read with him for the Royal Engineers. The boys must get off his hands as soon as possible he says, and Terry, being cleverest, must do so soonest ; but

the boy has seen the dullest side of soldiering, and hates it. His whole soul is set on scholarship. I am afraid it is a great mistake.'

'Can't you persuade him?'

'We have both written; but Rose has no great hopes of the result. I wish he could follow his bent.'

'Yes,' said Jenny, lingering as she looked towards Church-house, 'the young instinct ought not to be repressed.'

Julius knew that she was recollecting how Archie Douglas had entreated to go to sea, and the desire had been quashed because he was an only son. His inclination to speak was as perilous as if he had been Rosamond herself, and he did not feel it unfortunate that Jenny found she must no longer stay away from home.

DISOBEDIENT CECIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'MRS. JERNINGHAM'S JOURNAL.'

CHAPTER XV.

ONE of the actors in this extraordinary little drama stood and stared at the other three, and the other three stood and stared at the one.

Mr. Vaux laboured under a disadvantage which none of the young ladies shared. He was a little short-sighted—not very—and he made a point of never owning to it, and so he seldom used a glass. On the present occasion he screwed up his eyes and examined the three girls carefully. And then screwed his eyes up still more and looked over their heads in search of the Byfield fly.

But the Byfield fly he could not see because it was not in sight, and he began to feel with an uncomfortable little shiver, that the cold air of the calm winter night was not agreeable to his spare frame clad in evening attire. So he invited the trio outside to enter the house, and led the way into a small sitting room near the hall door where a fire was burning brightly.

Meantime Juliet was seized with uncontrollable fits of laughter, and either could really hardly stand, or pretended that such was the case, and kept catching hold of the others to support her, and stumbling with a ludicrously exaggerated helplessness into the parlour, after Mr. Vaux, whose back was turned to them as he led the way.

'Now what does this mean?' he cried sharply, 'what makes you so late? Where is the fly? how did you come? and who—?' here he glanced at Juliet, and added with some of that hesitation which he was always disclaiming, 'is it one of the Miss Lesters?'

Juliet, delighted, put down her veil, which was a thick Shetland wrap, not fastened to the pretty hat but ready to be thrown over it if required, and just bowed her head. Cecil gave a short instantly suppressed laugh, and Helen's ready tears, for she was so thoroughly shaken and alarmed by the events of the evening that her tears were ready on every or no provocation, began once more slowly to roll down her cheeks.

There was only a dim lamp burning in the room, so that a short-sighted man might be excused for not immediately recognizing Mrs. Wyndham, whom he only knew by sight, and whose face was quite concealed from view.

'What is the matter? has there been an accident?' he asked, almost startled out of his usual precise manner by the strange positions. Juliet dared not speak—Helen could not—so it was left to Cecil to make any reply that had to be made.

'Yes,' she said rather hesitatingly, 'we have met with an accident, we have been overturned.'

And here, unable to control her inclination any longer, partly from nervousness and partly from a sense of the ludicrousness of the situation, Cecil burst out laughing. As soon as she did so, a low gasping sound and then a sort of chuckle was heard from behind the Shetland wrap, and Helen began to laugh too, while her tears flowed so fast that she was threatened with hysterics.

'You have met with an accident?' said Mr. Vaux oracularly, 'and it has made you all nervous—but nervousness—I have no hesitation in saying, that nervousness is a thing that everybody can struggle against and always bring under their own control.'

His three auditors struggled, but not with any very great success, for there was very little appearance of their having their nerves under their own control.

'Now, perhaps you will inform me what was the nature of the accident you met with,' continued Mr. Vaux. 'It is necessary that I *should* be informed. Cecil, I apply to you for information—necessary information—what was the nature of the accident you met with?'

'One of the horses fell,' replied Cecil in a very low voice.

'One of the horses?' answered her uncle, in a tone of mild reproach. 'Cecil, where is your accuracy? when was there ever more than one horse in the Byfield fly?'

'It was *not* the Byfield fly, uncle,' said Cecil desperately.

'O papa,' cried Helen, unable to support the scene any longer, 'I do feel so ill—may not I go to bed?'

'I wish you had more strength of mind, Helen—if you had more strength of mind you would have more strength of body, but as unfortunately—I have no hesitation in saying *unfortunately*—you have *not*, you had *better* go to bed.'

Then he turned to the others.

'What will Miss Lester do?' he said. 'Mr. and Mrs. Lester will assuredly be very much frightened; it was kind of you to accompany the Misses Vauxes, but, at the same time, I rather wonder that your parents permitted you to contemplate a drive back by yourself. It appears to me that taking the circumstances, taking all the circumstances into consideration, I had better call Robert up (I permitted Robert to go to bed) and send him to tell your parents that you are safe, while you might on this

one occasion share my niece's rooms ; I do not approve, of course I do not in general approve of impromptu plans, but there are circumstances which make impromptu plans indispensable.'

'Thanks,' mumbled Juliet, hardly articulate between a desire to laugh and an attempt, partly in fun, and without any deliberate wish to deceive, to feign a voice, 'but I shall be fetched.'

'Oh, you will be fetched,' repeated Mr. Vaux ; 'your family are perhaps aware of your situation, and you will be sent for here?'

At that moment there was the sound of footsteps on the gravel outside, and immediately afterwards a hasty knock at the hall door. Then Mrs. Wyndham said very abruptly indeed, 'Good-night, old fellow,' and without another look at or word to anyone walked out of the room and out of the house, closing the hall door after her with a great bang. She found her husband as she expected, waiting for her on the steps, looking very pale and grave. Stern, she thought also, as she stole a half-frightened look at his fine manly face which she could distinctly see under the light of the moon.

'O Juliet,' he said, 'what have you been about? how very, very foolish; what danger you have run into. How dared David? I shall give him warning to-morrow.'

'No, please don't, Leo ; I am immensely sorry, but it was all my fault, not his, and to send him away would be punishing me too severely, it would indeed.'

'He had no business to drive ladies fast down that steep hill.'

'But I *told* him, and I kept calling out "faster! faster!"'

'I had no idea you were so childish and foolish.'

'Yes, but I am! it's a great pity, but I am!'

'You might have been all killed.'

'Isn't it nice that we were not?'

'Juliet, don't answer me in that way, I am very much disturbed and displeased.'

'Dear Leo,' nestling up to him as they walked along, 'I am so very sorry, and you are so good; you are thinking only of the danger I was in and not one bit of your beautiful valuable horse. Oh, will Diomed die?'

'I don't know; I only know what John told me, I suppose he will, but I came straight here to find you, and told John to ride on to the horse, and take some of the men to help, and to fetch the vet from the village as he went back!'

'I do hope Diomed will not die!'

'I expect he will; but Juliet, I think more of what you have done; the foolish plan of driving away with those girls at this time of night, especially when their people have not called on you, and then making David drive fast down that hill. How can I ever trust you, Juliet! I don't like not being able to trust you! I don't like my wife behaving like a silly school-girl.'

'Forgive me, Leo dear, dearest Leo, forgive me. I never will again!

I'll be as wise as if I was middle-aged ! I'll behave like a Roman matron always everywhere ! I can't bear to vex you, Leo, you know I can't ; I am so sorry ; do kiss me directly and believe in me.'

Colonel Wyndham kissed his beautiful wife very tenderly.

'You are a dear child,' he said, 'but I don't want you to be a child any more, I want you to behave like a sensible man's wife !'

'To be sure, and so I will. Nobody ever behaved better than I will ; O you dear Leo, how nice you are to forgive me and kiss me and to be so dear, and to think so much more of me than of Diomed.'

'Yes,' said Colonel Wyndham drily, 'I do think rather more of my wife than of my horse.'

'I was afraid you would be so dreadfully vexed about Diomed.'

'I *am* very much vexed—I shall be very much vexed to-morrow—to-night I can only think of you having been so foolish !'

'Oh, hush, you have forgiven me.'

'And of you having been in such danger ; but I have a great regard for Diomed personally, besides which he is a valuable horse ; so his loss is a very vexatious result of your frolic !'

'And you must not be angry with David !'

'I can't forgive David for driving you fast down that hill !'

'O Leo ! not when I called out "faster ! faster !"'

'He ought not to have attended to you ; how can I trust him again ? He ought not to have gone one hair'sbreadth faster than was perfectly safe, notwithstanding anything you might say !'

'Well, scold him, and forgive him ; promise me that you will forgive him, Leo ?'

'No, Juliet, I won't promise you ; I shall talk to him and judge for myself. I can't have my judgment biassed beforehand !'

And with that Juliet Wyndham had to be contented. She could coax her husband to a certain point and no further, and all she could do was to determine in her own mind that David *should* be forgiven, and that even if he was condemned and given warning to-morrow, his master should relent before the end of the month.

'If not, I shall feel remorse,' thought Juliet to herself ; 'and I can't do that, it would be so very uncomfortable.'

'I am afraid Mr. Vaux must have been greatly annoyed,' said the Colonel after a pause, speaking himself in an annoyed manner ; 'he must have thought it a great liberty altogether, and when we don't visit.'

'That only made it all the more good-natured of me to bring them home.'

'Rather too good-natured, Juliet ; I thought so at the time, but there was no use my saying anything when you had planned it all ; and the girls were standing by. But I don't want us to thrust ourselves on Mr. Vaux or anybody else. And how did he take it ? He must have been greatly displeased at you driving off in that way to the cliff-view.'

Mrs. Wyndham evaded the questions.

'He is the most intolerable man you ever saw, Leo,' she cried; 'I did not know there could be such a man; I really did not. Of all the precise prigs ever created, he is the precisest prig. I *do* pity those poor girls. I never pitied any girls so much in my life as I pity them.'

'He is a very good sort of man,' replied the Colonel calmly; 'he may be a little particular or so, but if the young ladies have nothing worse to put up with than his particularities, they may consider themselves quite as well off as their neighbours.'

'That is because you don't know him,' replied Juliet; 'if you did you would never say such unfeeling things, never; you are not heartless.'

'No,' replied he, 'I don't suppose I am heartless.'

Meantime Cecil found herself left alone with her uncle. He looked greatly astonished at the rapid departure that had just taken place, and heard first the sitting-room door and then the hall door bang in a sort of speechless dismay. Her last words he thought he could not have heard distinctly.

'Very strange, very abrupt, very unlike what I should have expected,' he muttered to himself, perhaps not wishing Cecil to see his dissatisfaction with one of his model young ladies; which of the Miss Lesters is that?'

Cecil did not seem to hear. 'Good night, uncle James,' she said, 'I am so cold and sleepy and frightened. I really think I shall be ill if I don't go to bed at once. Good-night.'

And not waiting for another question she followed Helen upstairs. She found her cousin in her dressing-gown crouching over the fire and looking rather miserable, but Cecil, free from the restraint of her uncle's presence, and the whole thing over, could not keep from laughing, and when once she began her strong sense of the ludicrous, joined on the present occasion, perhaps, to a nervousness arising from the complication of events and feelings, caused her laughter to continue so long that it really seemed interminable. Laughter is, as we all know almost as catching as yawning, and Helen, taking the infection from Cecil, the two girls sat on two opposite chairs, one at each corner of the fire-place, and laughed and laughed, till they could laugh no longer.

At last Cecil spoke, though her speech was intermixed with those little gasps and pauses which laughter renders inevitable.

'He took her for one of the Lesters and asked which. Oh, you were there, I forgot,' she cried; 'and when Colonel Wyndham came knocking at the door she just said "good night" and walked off, banging both the doors after her, so that nothing, actually nothing, was discovered, and to this moment he thinks it was one of the Lesters, and asked me which?'

'O Cecil, Cecil, what did you say?' gasped Helen.

'Nothing at all. I never answered the question, but just said I was tired and sleepy, and would follow you, and then off I went, without

allowing him time to speak again. Poor uncle James, what *will* he say? poor uncle James!

‘How frightened you must have been when the knock came at the door!’

‘I thought it was all over—of course I thought it was all over, but you never saw anything so neatly done in your life as Juliet’s exit. It was like something on the stage, and uncle James stared and muttered to himself about its being abrupt and strange. Had it been anyone but a Miss Lester he would have been quite indignant with her.’

‘And she actually got away undiscovered?’

‘Actually; but Helen, I think I shall tell him to-morrow who it was. It is mean to be frightened. It is as if we were ashamed of having been with her.’

‘What will you tell him?’

‘Why, that Mrs. Wyndham offered to take us home and Mrs. Lester consented. I suppose as it was his dear Mrs. Lester who consented he will not see any harm in it.’

‘And will you tell him about our driving to the cliff?’

‘I don’t know, that was Juliet’s affair, and it might make him angry with her. I suppose I have no business to do that. Unless he asks questions, which would oblige me to say what was not true, I think I shall only tell him that we came with her and met with the accident.’

‘How I wish we had come home quietly in the Byfield fly.’

‘Do you really, Helen? Well, I don’t know, it was very exciting, and even danger is pleasant when it is over. It is very pleasant to have been in danger when one is out of it again. If only Diomed will recover I shall think it was an evening of glorious fun.’

‘But oh, Cecil, what a moment it was when papa opened the door to us!’

‘Yes, that *was* a moment, and we were so sure he had not come home, and that we should see nobody’s face but Eliza’s. It certainly was an awful moment.’

‘How astonished he looked.’

‘Yes, it is something to see uncle James thoroughly put out. It is a treat one does not often have. Of course I don’t mean put out of humour, one sees that often enough, but taken by surprise so that he is thrown off his balance. Poor man, he has been a good deal astonished this evening, first by the method of our return, and then by Miss Lester’s abrupt behaviour!’

‘And now, Cecil, I am so sleepy, I can’t keep my eyes open, and I shall talk nothing but nonsense if I go on talking at all.’

‘And I am awake, wide awake. I only wish [the ball was to take place to-night. I feel up to anything except just going quietly to bed. I should like nothing better than to slip out of the house now and dance till daylight.’

‘Oh, you will soon find out you are sleepy if you go to bed.’

‘I thought I was sleepy downstairs when I was under uncle James’s soporific influence, but that laughing woke me up, and I am wide awake now.’

And so the cousins kissed each other and went to bed, Cecil fulfilling Helen’s prophecy, and falling asleep much sooner than she had considered possible.

Her sleep was not, perhaps, undisturbed. To some natures calm and quiet sleep is impossible after strong excitement, and Cecil was one of these. Helen slumbered like a child, but Cecil tossed and turned, and muttered words that woke her often for the first few hours ; after that the excitement wore out and she slept soundly till morning.

She rose feeling in very good spirits, and quite able to encounter her uncle James, and to play her part in a satisfactory manner if circumstances obliged her to play a part in another scene of the drama, and explain the occurrences of the previous night.

‘I shall tell him the truth,’ she said to herself. ‘The only way in which my asserting my rights and acting independently could lead to wrong would be if it caused me to say what is not true, so I must take care. I shall tell him the truth if he asks me a single question. I shall say that Mrs. Wyndham requested Mrs. Lester to let her take us home, and Mrs. Lester instantly agreed ; and that one of the horses fell and the carriage was overturned, and we had to walk. I shall not tell him of our prolonging our drive unless he asks, when the horses fell, which he is likely enough to do, he always pries so ; if he asks that question I shall tell him the whole truth, but as that was Juliet’s doing I have no right to mention it unless I am obliged. He can’t blame Helen or me for *that*. If Mrs. Wyndham, when we were in her carriage, chose to order her coachman to drive to some particular place we could not help ourselves, but I am afraid he would blame *her*, and make a most unpleasant fuss, so I shall say nothing about it unless I am forced. How I do wonder what the Colonel said to Juliet, and whether he was very much vexed. I do hope he was not very much vexed, and I do wonder how I shall learn anything about it or about how poor Diomed is. Oh, I do hope Diomed will recover. If only Diomed recovers I shall *like* it all.’

While these thoughts flitted through Cecil’s mind she performed her toilet in a very cheerful spirit. But her cheerfulness was a little dimmed when her eye fell on the box which lay on the top of the chest of drawers, and which contained the flowers which Juliet had insisted on her buying for the ball. Buying, if articles which were not paid for could be considered to be bought—for it occurred to Cecil, with quite an uncomfortable pang of a nature to which she was very little accustomed, that she had no means of paying for the flowers, that she did not know when she should have the means, and that she also did not know whether Mrs. Mulready would wait or whether she would all of a sudden send in her bill to uncle James. She opened the box and looked at its contents, which lay therein, surrounded with silver paper, white, gleaming and

lovely. She smiled as she saw them, and the hope of a coming pleasure stole into her heart, and dissipated the annoying thoughts that had been there. But the box did not only contain the flowers: among them lay a half sheet of note-paper, neatly folded. Cecil had opened this before now, and had then thrown it back into its place, almost as if it had been a noxious insect that had stung her fingers when they touched it. She lifted it, however, once more from its nest and read with reluctant eyes the sum at the bottom of the page.

One pound ten—thirty shillings—and she had not a farthing of money in her possession, would not have any for nearly three months, and then would only receive one pound, for one pound a quarter was the sum Mr. Vaux allowed to her and to Helen for pocket money, one of his strongest principles being that girls ought to have as little money at their own disposal as it was possible for them to have. Even when they were grown up into womanhood, even when they were mistresses of houses he considered that the fewer gold pieces and crisp bits of paper that passed through their hands, the better it was for themselves in particular and for the world in general, and while in their nonage of course this feeling was stronger still, so Cecil and Helen were supplied with clothes and other necessities, and each of them received one pound a quarter as pocket money. Cecil's last sixpence had been expended in the purchase of white kid gloves and elastic on that memorable occasion in Vellecot's shop, and at the end of three months' time she would receive one pound, and she owed thirty shillings.

This was not an exhilarating reflection for a young lady who, whatever her faults might be, was not in the habit of running in debt, had, in fact, never owed anything in her life before; but whether it was exhilarating or not it unfortunately was the truth, and as such Cecil was obliged to receive it.

'I think all the arrangements that are made about 'money are extremely bad, Helen,' she remarked as her cousin joined her before they went downstairs together to breakfast.

'Do you?' replied Helen, surprised and not particularly interested; 'but what arrangements *are* made?'

'Oh, that men get it all and just dole out little bits to women.'

'But do they?' enquired Helen.

'Of course they do; who ever heard of women being paid money and giving it to men?'

'But men earn money, and so of course it is paid to them.'

'Oh yes; uncle James earns a great deal of money, does not he?'

'Papa? Oh, but he has it of his own.'

'But why has he got it of his own instead of us?'

'I don't know, I'm sure; because he is older, I suppose, and a man.'

'Exactly; you see you say it as a matter of course—because he is a man; but why, Helen? why because he is a man?'

'Oh, come, Cecil, this won't quite do: you are the last person who

should complain, or say men get it all. Why, you will have money of your own when you are of age,' cried Helen, laughing.

'True, I had really forgotten that for the moment; but it is very unfair *now*, all the same.'

'No, it is not; I don't think it is one bit; and it has nothing to do with our being girls only—it would be just the same if we were boys. Aunt Elinor has all the money, and gives George and Walter just what she chooses.'

'Yes, because aunt Elinor is a widow; but if uncle Charles was alive, *he* would have it, and just make Aunt Elinor an allowance as if she was a child.'

'A big, handsome allowance, though, with which she could buy all sorts of beautiful things. I should like of all things to have a *real* allowance, Cecil.'

'Yes, a *real* allowance, not that wretched little pittance of four pounds a year, which I sometimes think is worse than nothing.'

'I can't agree with you there. I like my four pounds a year very well, especially as we have everything bought for us, and, in fact, have nothing to do with it; but I should like a good deal more a great deal better.'

'If there is anything we *have* to buy, we can't help running in debt,' said Cecil.

'O Cecil! but there is nothing we *have* to buy; and girls never do run in debt; it would be dreadful if they did.'

'I had to buy those flowers for my hair. Juliet said I could not go to the ball without them, so I could not help myself, and how am I ever to pay for them? That is what I call most unfair and unjust, and I don't see how you can say anything to the contrary,' Helen.'

Helen's face became exceedingly serious, and she pondered over her cousin's words, but without seeming to perceive light.

'I suppose you *had* to buy them?' she said, at last, doubtfully.

'Of course I had,' replied Cecil sharply; 'do you think I should have done so if I could have helped it?—you *suppose* I had!—that is so like you,' Helen.'

'Dear Cecil, don't be vexed with me,' replied Helen, her eyes filling with tears at her cousin's rather angry manner.

'But it is very vexing about the flowers, and of course I don't like you to speak as if I need not have done it.'

'Mrs. Wyndham did not know you could not pay for them,' Helen said slowly.

'That was the very thing I did not *want* her to know; because she talked of giving them to me, and it would have been so horrid for her to suppose I could not afford it—like *asking* her for them—my not having money, and her not knowing it, was just what *obliged* me to buy them; but you do grow so stupid, Helen; you really never now seem to understand anything!'

Helen put her arm round Cecil's waist and kissed her.

'Dear Cecil, I don't *mean* to be stupid,' she said softly.

Then Cecil held Helen to her tightly and gave her a good kiss, and then cried a little, to Helen's distress and surprise, for though her own tears were always very ready, Cecil's were not.

'Are you well?' she said wonderingly, while she returned the embrace with fervour.

'Oh yes, I am well enough,' laughed Cecil, ashamed of her tears, and hastily brushing them away, 'only I am worried, and worry, I think, is almost worse than anything else.'

At that moment the breakfast-bell sounded, and the girls hurried downstairs, afraid of being late and so rousing their uncle's ire on this particular morning.

Cecil, true to her resolutions of truth-speaking, and feeling brave and a little excited at the idea of what she might have to encounter, experienced a sensation akin to disappointment when she found Mr. Vaux so immersed in letters of importance that no opportunity was afforded her of saying a word. Aunt Flora was breakfasting in bed, tired by the unwonted dissipation of a dinner party, so that there was no talk with her about the Penny Reading, which, if there had been, might, as Cecil had reflected, lead to the enlightenment of her uncle. While she felt regret at this, the timid Helen rejoiced, and ate her breakfast with a sigh of relief when she found that no unpleasant scene was likely to occur.

Mademoiselle was languid, yawned repeatedly, and had lost her appetite. She looked out of window at the snow, indistinctly seen through frost-covered panes.

'Ah, the climate,' she said, 'the climate which the Eenglis has, how *triste* it is—how *triste* and regretful!'

None of the three inhabitants of the schoolroom were much inclined for their studies that morning. Helen, who was not very strong, was really tired, and felt as if she had caught cold on the preceding night. Cecil had her mind full of other things, as was generally the case now; and mademoiselle appeared to be unusually affected by the 'regretful Eenglis climate,' or by something else. Half an hour before dinner, while they were languidly reading a French play together, the schoolroom maid appeared with an unexpected summons to the two girls to go to Mr. Vaux in his study. This was an almost unprecedented thing during schooltime, and Cecil and Helen exchanged startled glances. Mademoiselle closed the volume with an air of undoubted relief, and the cousins ran hastily downstairs.

'What is it?' whispered Helen.

'He suspects something,' replied Cecil oracularly.

'Oh, don't say so,' poor Helen faltered out; 'I don't *think* he does, for frightful things seldom happen when we *are* frightened—they come by surprise in sudden shocks.'

‘One can’t reckon on that.’

‘No,’ replied Helen solemnly ; ‘one can’t reckon on anything.’

And so they walked into the august presence waiting for them in the study.

Mr. Vaux was standing before the fire, and, after their entrance, faced them for nearly a minute in perfect silence, his eyes fixed upon them with an expression of concentrated anger.

‘What does this mean, young ladies?’ he said at last.

Helen, terrified, felt inclined to run away, and glanced round her, feeling the impossibility of doing so, with glances such as an alarmed animal might give, who, having been placed in a cage, knows that the next act of its keeper will be to kill it, and feels utterly helpless in his power ; but Cecil’s spirit rose to the encounter ; her countenance cleared of the clouds that had hung on it during the morning, and her eyes met her uncle’s clear and sparkling.

‘You sent for us, did not you?’ she replied, giving a calm, matter-of-fact reply to his impassioned question.

‘Yes, I sent for you, undoubtedly I sent for you ; but, *why*? WHY? that is the question. The question is *why* did I send for you?’

‘Yes?’ replied she interrogatively.

‘I sent for you,’ he cried in a voice of thunder, ‘because I went—I went to Mrs. Lester—I went to Mrs. Lester’ (he kept pausing between the words, and looking from Cecil to Helen and Helen to Cecil, as if he expected to see them annihilated before his eyes) ‘to inquire how her daughter—her *daughter* had reached home last night. Mrs. Lester was out, but I learned that *all* the young ladies had returned with her, and that none of them had accompanied you here ; you can imagine the feelings with which I learned this, and with which I walked back knowing myself deceived—DECEIVED by members of my own household. WHAT is the explanation?’

He scowled at them as he uttered this question, and Helen shrank back in terror ; Cecil put out her hand and clasped hers in an encouraging manner.

‘Indeed, uncle James,’ she said, ‘nobody wanted to deceive you, you deceived yourself, and we were all so tired and done up that——’

‘Stop,’ he cried, raising his hand impressively ; ‘even in a moment like this, do not let us forget that we are ladies and gentlemen. I have no hesitation in saying that in *no* moment of our lives we ought to forget that we are ladies and gentlemen. You were all so—*what*, Cecil?’

‘Done up, I said,’ replied she. ‘I did not know that there was any harm in it, *really* I did not,’ she added quite earnestly, her uncle’s extreme seriousness affecting her.

‘Really you did not,’ he said sorrowfully, ‘you really did not know there was any harm in *done up*. Done up ! Well, well, I am grieved that you did not, Cecil ; and I ask, as a personal favour, that I may

never hear the words from your lips again,—I ask it as a personal favour,' he repeated with an air of proud humility.

Cecil bowed her head, for she felt at a loss how to make any other reply ; but in her heart she despised her uncle for being so particular about words. 'What would he have thought of Juliet last night, when she talked of some one having "cheek," and contradicted herself by saying "Well, it's a lie." Of course if a big, vulgar woman had said *that*, in a big, vulgar way, it would not have been nice, but it was charming as Juliet said it : the words tripped out so saucily and yet so delicately, and she gave such a queer, sweet little smile, as if at her own impudence in saying them ; but what would *he* have thought of it, if "done up" makes him almost ill ?'

These ideas glanced through her mind while her uncle waved his hand as if in acceptance of her acquiescent bow of the head.

'To resume,' he said emphatically, 'to resume. *Who* was the—the—PERSON who accompanied you home last night, and whom I—yes—whom I addressed as Miss Lester ?'

'Indeed, uncle James, no one said she was Miss Lester, and we were all tired and frightened, and I think she was amused, and so just for a minute did not say who she was ; and then he came, and she was *obliged* to go home at once.'

'*He* came,' repeated Mr. Vaux, in a resigned manner, as if matters had gone so far that all agitation was over, 'and *she* was obliged to go—very well, Cecil. Who was *he* ? and who was *she* ? kindly reply to my questions, which I am inclined to think I have a right to ask, as I believe—I *believe* this house, to which *he* came, and from which *she* went, is mine.'

'Certainly, uncle,' said Cecil ; 'we left the Penny Reading with Mrs. Wyndham.'

'Mrs. Wyndham !' cried he, raising his hands with horror. 'This is worse than I expected ! Mrs. Wyndham ! How did you dare ?'

'We didn't dare,' she retorted. 'It was Mrs. Lester ; she sent us. She arranged it all. She told us to go with Mrs. Wyndham, and we went.'

Mr. Vaux sat hastily down, and then seeming to feel that the action was undignified, rose yet more hastily, and tried to look as if he had not sat down at all.

'Mrs. Lester ?' he said slowly. 'She arranged it ? Well, there must have been some reason, then. Perhaps, Cecil, you will have the goodness to inform me *why* Mrs. Lester made this arrangement ?'

'I am sure I don't know, uncle, unless it was because it saved her trouble, and enabled her to go home at once with her daughters instead of sending us first.'

'And you mean to tell me that Mrs. Lester asked Mrs. Wyndham to send you home in her carriage, she not going in your direction, and you not being acquainted with Mrs. Wyndham ?'

Cecil's eyes looked defiantly at him, but her lips did not move to make any reply.

Then Helen spoke in a timid confused way. 'Papa, I think—I suppose—I mean that it was Mrs. Wyndham asked, and I'm sure—that is I believe—Mrs. Lester thought we knew her quite well.'

'And on what authority, Helen, do you make these extraordinary—yes, I have no hesitation in saying these *extraordinary* statements?'

'O papa!' replied poor Helen, appalled, 'on no authority whatever.'

'I thought as much,' said her father quite triumphantly; though why he triumphed, except for the sake of contradiction, it would be hard to say, as he seemed to be turning the tables against his especial favourite, Mrs. Lester. 'I thought as much. Well, Cecil, have you anything more to say?'

'Helen is quite right,' replied Cecil calmly. 'Mrs. Wyndham *did* propose it, very kindly, and Mrs. Lester *did* think that we knew her, very naturally.'

'I am at a loss—I am altogether at a loss to understand the meaning of your words, Cecil,' said her uncle with a wave of both his hands in the air. 'Do I hear aright when I imagine you to say that Mrs. Wyndham, on whose husband I have never called, *offered* to take you in her carriage, and that Mrs. Lester *naturally* thought you were acquainted with Mrs. Wyndham, on whose husband I have never called!'

'Yes, uncle, exactly,' replied she in a cool collected manner which astonished the frightened Helen.

'Very well, then, *if* I am really right, may I trouble you to explain yourself?'

'Certainly, sir, if you will tell me what I am to explain.'

'O Cecil,' interrupted Helen, 'tell papa; you know how it was. Mrs. Wyndham was talking to us, and so Mrs. Lester could not help thinking it, and it was only meant kindly to everybody, and we did not in the least mean to do wrong. Mrs. Wyndham asked and Mrs. Lester said it would be a very good plan, and so—and so—we got into the carriage.'

'Then pray understand, Helen, and pray understand, Cecil, that whatever *they* meant and *you* meant, or did not mean, you *did* extremely wrong; so wrong that I am amazed to think how well-brought-up young ladies—for however lamentable the results may be, there is no doubt that you *are* well brought up—could have so far forgotten what was due to themselves and to others. You had no right whatever to go with Mrs. Wyndham in her carriage when *I* had arranged that you should return home in the Byfield fly; and although Mrs. Lester's part of the proceedings *may* be justifiable—I have no hesitation in saying that her part of the proceedings *may* be justifiable—inasmuch as she believed that you were properly and legitimately acquainted with Mrs. Wyndham; yet, as *you* were both of you perfectly well aware that such was *not* the case, *nothing* can justify your behaviour. I blush to think of it, and as to Mrs. Wyndham, I can only say that she is a very forward young woman.'

'Oh, but that is too absurd ! Juliet !' began Cecil with impulsive anger ; but, suddenly struck by what appeared to her as the extreme hideousness of such an expression applied to Mrs. Wyndham, she stopped short, and burst into a hearty fit of laughter. She checked herself as soon as she could, and said, 'I really beg your pardon, uncle James, but I could not help it.'

'I wish the things you can't help, Cecil, were *ever* right things,' replied her uncle mournfully.

'We are very sorry indeed, papa,' said Helen, 'indeed we are. Mrs. Wyndham was good-naturedly talking to us, and then proposed this to Mrs. Lester, who did not see any harm in it, and so we thought we might.'

'It all shows,' said Mr. Vaux solemnly, 'how utterly unfit you either of you are to be in any way, at any time, trusted to yourselves. I did believe you were safe *at* a Penny Reading *with* Mrs. Lester.' These words were uttered with a mournful and meaning emphasis. 'But not even so can your movements be controlled within the limits of propriety, and I see that you ought never to be allowed to go anywhere without either mademoiselle or myself being with you. This precaution shall in future be preserved. But while we study a Precaution for the Future, we must not forget a Punishment for the Past. Your conduct last night was reprehensible to the last degree. I have no hesitation in saying that it was reprehensible to the last degree, and as a mark of my displeasure for it, and in the hope of producing some impression—*some* impression—on your minds, or *both* your minds, I shall for the next six months decline *every* invitation you may receive, and allow you to join in no social meetings that may take place in the neighbourhood.'

By making this announcement Mr. Vaux appeared to be restored. He plumed himself, as one may say, as if resting with self-approval after some fatigue, and a softened and contented expression stole into his face.

Helen's countenance fell, and her eyes filled with tears ; but Cecil did not appear to mind at all. In her own heart she rejoiced at the idea of not having to spend any more days with the Lesters, and she knew that the only engagements she could now care for, any in which Colonel and Mrs. Wyndham joined, would not have been permitted under the best and most favourable circumstances. Besides which she thought of the ball with a thrill at once of defiance and delight, and resolved more than ever that she would go to it, if to go to it was possible.

'And it *shall* be possible,' she said to herself. 'Everything is possible, if one has only the spirit and the will to do it. The will is and the spirit shall not be wanting either.'

(To be continued.)

A YORK AND A LANCASTER ROSE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'JANET'S HOME.'

CHAPTER XII.

THE ALPACA UMBRELLA GIRL.

THE decision about the essays was put off for a fortnight. A great many of the compositions besides Rose's proved to be lengthy, and Mr. Henderson told his pupils that he meant to read them all over carefully, and take time to judge of their respective merits. 'The prize itself,' he said, 'was a small affair, and he did not usually give prizes, but as he had suggested the writing of these themes, and his pupils had responded so pleasantly to the suggestion, he would give them full consideration, and make them tests of progress and attention.' This little harangue occasioned a good deal of flutter and excitement among the young ladies of both classes, who were assembled together in the largest class-room to hear it. The elder girls lingered after their lecture was over, to discuss each other's chances of success, and the younger ones drew apart and lamented the little possibility there was of their exertions being rewarded.

'There is no chance, of course, for any of us,' some one said in Florence's hearing, 'unless perhaps for one of the Ingrams. Mr. Henderson knows mamma, and I heard him say to her one day, that some of the Ingrams were very clever.'

'He could not mean Rose, for till quite lately she was always getting into disgrace for giggling, and Maggie, I am sure, is stupid enough, and, as for Florence——'

But here some one observed Florence's neighbourhood, and gave the speaker a nudge, and the sentence ended. There had been enough, however, to stimulate Florence's hopes, and to induce her to give all the thoughts she could spare from speculating on the end of 'Jane Eyre,' to dream of the pleasure it would be to bring home a prize. Rose thought less about it, partly because the work her father gave her to do in the morning required more attention than she had ever given to work before, and partly because, by dint of great care to avoid forfeits in the school-room, she had at length amassed a sufficient sum of money to buy the black leather bag long since recommended by Maggie, and was proceeding to exercise her ingenuity in ways of filling it. A great deal of rubbish got in at first, and it threatened to be more fit for pretence use in games of Desert Island, than a receptacle of useful presents for anyone; but by degrees discrimination came, and many odds and ends of 'thinking times,' such as running-up-and-down-stairs times, and dressing times, and sewing times, and practising easy bits of music times, which Rose would once have given to silly little dreams about herself, her good looks, her new dresses, and her chances of small pleasures, were occupied now in inventing ingenious plans for sealing-waxing old dolls' heads firmly on

their shoulders, mending old boxes, whistles, and whips, or coaxing nurse into giving lining and tape enough to enable her to turn four torn dolls' frocks into a cape for Polly Marshall. The weather changed during this fortnight too, the frost broke, and spring seemed to come all at once, bringing soft airs and wafts of flower scents into the Ingrams' school-room. The walks were prolonged sometimes so far as to take the school-room party to a bit of waste ground not quite built over yet, where the girls gathered dusty daisies, not however wanting crimson tips; and once found, at the foot of a dust-heap, a miraculous yellow buttercup, which Rose brought home, and insisted on pinning into her father's coat in the evening, when he was going out to a dinner-party, and which was, he said, the first flower he had worn since he married. A good many privileges came to the school-room children with the finer weather. Mrs. Ingram's fears of colds and sore-throats being relaxed, they were less closely watched, and when school hours were over, had liberty to roam about the house, and make homes for themselves in odd corners; light closets, where boxes and brooms were kept, or twisty nooks on the garret stairs, which for no particular reason that the grown-ups could discover, were voted more agreeable places for study and play than any room in the house. One source of happiness, which on looking back Rose believed all the former springs of her life had brought her, was however sadly missing that year. Mrs. Ingram did not throw off any of her ailments with the returning warm weather, or take up any of the active habits she had laid down, one by one, when the cold set in. Rose watched for the usual little changes, and when they did not come, first wondered, and then grew a little anxious. Surely there was a great difference in mamma since last year. Last year she had gone herself to choose their spring jackets and hats, and on coming home had seen them all tried on in the day nursery with great interest, and had even snatched up Trotty and carried him in her arms down to the study, to make papa admire him in his white felt hat and blue feather. This year Aunt Rachel bought all the things (not nearly such pretty ones), and when they were tried on, mamma had the children brought to her, one by one, as she lay on the sofa, that she might see how the new purchases suited, and even with that she was so tired before it came to Trotty's turn, that she could hardly look at him. After that day Rose ventured to break the silence of the morning greetings, by asking her father: 'Has mamma had a good night?' The first time she said this, Professor Ingram started and looked keenly and sorrowfully at her, as much as to say: 'Is it so bad as that then, that you have found it out too?' but after that, Rose thought he liked her to ask him, and they sometimes had quite long discussions, about how this or that little thing, that might have been too much for mamma, could be avoided another day. And after one of these talks, Professor Ingram would brighten up a little, and settle to his work with a less anxious face. With so many things to think of, it was not surprising that Rose should have few conjectures to spare, as to

whether her essay would be praised or not, or that she should astonish Florence when the day for the decision came, by remarking carelessly—

‘Oh, by the way, we are all to go into the big class-room to-day, with the old girls. Don’t you like it? We shall see Gertrude and Emma Moncrieff, Lady Dunallan’s nieces, and I hope one of them will get the prize, don’t you?’

‘Why should we wish one of them to get it,’ cried Florence. ‘I am sure they hardly ever take any notice of us. They are such very grown-up girls and always seem to be thinking how old they are, and that we are not worth speaking to.’

‘Well, but they *are* nearly quite grown up you know, and have longer dresses and more hair than anyone else, and they are the only girls in the first class whose names we know. That was why I wished one of them to get the prize; though now I think of it I believe I had rather it came to that reddish-haired girl in the shabby brown hat, who sat at the end of the bench on the day we were there. I noticed that she had cotton gloves, and brought a very ugly old alpaca umbrella into the room with her. One of the Moncrieffs, in passing, swept the umbrella down with her dress, and looked at it, and left it on the floor, and the brown-hatted girl turned as red as fire and went and picked it up. You may depend upon it she is clever, and an orphan, and high-spirited, and very poor, and I think she is almost certain to get the prize. I shall watch and expect to see her rise and walk to Mr. Henderson’s desk when the motto is read out.’

‘But you know nothing about her, and you do give such odd contradictory reasons for wishing and expecting things,’ said Florence crossly. ‘I wish you would not say anything more about it.’

Florence had not eaten any breakfast that morning, and had worked herself into a state of expectation that made it difficult for her to keep her temper, and Rose skipped away from her and joined Maggie, with whom she discussed the last addition to the bag up to the moment of their entrance into the class-room. There was no reason why they should not chatter to-day, she pleaded to the Fräulein, for they had no preparation to think over. There was to be no lecture to-day; the reading of the two best essays aloud and commenting on them would, Mr. Henderson had said, fill up all the time.

‘There are the Moncrieffs,’ cried Rose, when they were seated in the class-room. ‘Oh, what pretty new spring hats and dresses they have; and there is the alpaca umbrella girl, in the same old velvet hat, very dusty, but she has a nice clever sort of face. Do look at her, Maggie, I am sure she expects the prize, for see, she does not turn her head, now Mr. Henderson has come in, and is walking to his desk. She stands up stiffly and goes on pinching the ends of her fingers. That is what I should do if I were very anxious about anything, and my heart were beating very quickly. Well, she’ll know in a minute or two more, and I hope it will be right for her.’

Florence, though she was anxious, and her heart was beating quickly, had turned her head and seen that Mr. Henderson was carrying two thickish rolls of paper in his hand, and that one of them was blueish-lined paper such as the Fräulein always gave them to write their compositions on. To be sure several people might use the same sort of paper, but its familiar look brought unreasonable certainty to Florence's mind. She did not think of Rose, she thought only of herself, and through the few preliminary remarks Mr. Henderson spoke held herself ready to start up.

He began by praising all the essays a little, but said he had had no difficulty in picking out the two best. He had, however, hesitated long between these two, and chosen at last the one that appeared to him the most original. It was not the most correct nor altogether the best written of the two, but it had more of the writer's own thoughts in it, and less of what had been taken directly from books, and it was the most interesting. He would now, he said, proceed to read both essays aloud, putting the successful one last, and he believed that most of his auditors would come to the same conclusion that he had arrived at.

Here Mr. Henderson took up the white roll of paper and read aloud a composition to which Rose listened admiringly, and of which Florence did not hear a word,

'Is not it good?' Rose whispered at the close to Lucy Fanshawe. 'I am sure I did not know before all that about buying and selling, and remunerative and unremunerative labour and standards. How good the other one must be to be better than that. Why how odd! it begins just like mine. I said that at the beginning of my essay.'

Rose's chattering tongue was silenced after that, and she sat upright in her place, looking only at her hands that lay still in her lap while the rest of the reading went on.

Lucy Fanshawe wondered what had turned her so grave all of a sudden, till Maggie, who sat next to her on the other side, squeezed her hand tightly and whispered,

'That's Rose's essay Mr. Henderson is reading. Hers is the best of all. Oh, are not you glad?'

Florence swallowed with an effort a great lump that rose in her throat, and turned to look at Rose. She had raised her eyes at that moment and was listening attentively to the lecturer, who had paused at the end of the first page to remark upon the derivation of the word money, and the comparison of the word to a telescope, by which distant times were brought near. He liked a thoughtful remark such as this, he said, better than information collected from books.

'Ah, but the thought was not my own, I might just as well have read it in a book,' Rose's honest conscience said to her, and Florence wondered why her eyes looked thoughtful only, not in the least triumphant or glad.

Rose was too stupid and childish, Florence thought, to enjoy her success ; it *was*, yes, it *was* a pity that it had come to *her*.

There was a little pause after the motto had been read and the writer of the essay summoned to come forward and take the prize, and Maggie and Lucy Fanshawe had to push Rose to make her rise from her seat. She felt rather like a person in a dream, wanting to say something and not knowing how to begin, for fear the words that were in her mind to say should sound too strange in the stillness, while so many curious eyes were fixed on her. Some of the big girls actually stood up to see her pass, and as she came near the last bench she heard the Moncrieffs whispering to their neighbours. 'It's the eldest of the Ingram girls. Her father must have helped her. I'm certain she could not have written all that herself, for she is not a bit clever. She's a childish little thing for her age even. She must have been helped.' Mr. Henderson himself seemed a little surprised when he saw who was standing before his desk, but he stepped down to meet her, with a pretty little leather case containing the prize coin in his hand.

'This motto is yours, is it ? This Runic letter and saying ?'

'Yes, sir,' Rose answered in a very shaky voice, 'I copied it out of a book of my father's.'

'But in other respects the essay is quite your own, I presume ? You did not receive suggestions of how to treat the subject from any older person ?'

The colour rushed vehemently into Rose's face, and tears came to her eyes with the effort of saying what she now felt she must say. 'I don't think it was quite my own.'

'Do you mean that you were helped ?'

'Yes, a little ; papa helped me a little, and Professor Mason, one evening when he was at our house, I think a good deal.'

The words were spoken slowly and with great effort, and in the stillness of the room all the students heard them. A rustle of dresses and a subdued murmur of voices came from the benches where the big girls sat, whether it betokened indignation or only surprise could not be told. Mr. Henderson turned and looked at the eager faces of his elder pupils, and then back again at Rose. 'I think we had better leave the question undecided for the present,' he said, after a few moments' thought. 'I will call on Professor Ingram this evening, and learn from him exactly what amount of help he gave, and meanwhile Miss Ingram can go back to her place. We are all very much obliged to her for speaking so openly, and if she has received assistance in writing her theme, I am sure it must have been from not understanding that by doing so she was gaining an unfair advantage over others. The lecture is over for to-day.'

Rose was glad of the bustle and general uprising that followed this announcement, as it helped her to get back to her place unnoticed ; but as it was a quarter of an hour earlier than the class usually broke up, a great many of the girls could not get away immediately, being obliged to

wait till their mothers or governesses came to fetch them away. Fräulein von Bohlen had taken advantage of there being no regular lecture to be absent from the class that afternoon, and the Ingrams were among those who lingered in the class-room after Mr. Henderson left it. The students broke up into little groups for gossip and conversation; but no one joined Rose and her sisters except Lucy Fanshawe; their other classmates, small and great, were too busy discussing Rose's conduct that day to care to come within ear-shot. They were whispering to each other their wonder that she should have spoken out so boldly to Mr. Henderson, and confessed before everybody such a serious offence as having received help to write a prize essay. She must surely have known that it was unfair, and if she was mean enough to act so, what could have made her tell of herself? Even Lucy Fanshawe was too full of wonder to be quite an agreeable companion, and Rose strolled away from her at last to the far end of the room, and was pretending to look at a map diligently when she felt her shoulder touched, and turning round, found the alpaca umbrella girl standing near her.

'I am just going, Miss Ingram,' she said quickly, 'but I thought I should like to speak a word to you, and tell you that the other theme that was read was mine.'

'Oh, was it? I thought so,' cried Rose.

'Did you? how could you tell?'

'I don't know, it came into my head, and you looked down, and pinched your fingers, and I saw that you cared.'

'Yes, I do care very much, but it is not for myself; indeed. I should like to tell you why I care, if I had time. What I want to say just now is, that I do admire you for confessing you had been helped; and I am so much obliged to you. I could not have spoken out as you did, and I am a great deal older than you.'

'Oh yes, you would,' said Rose, 'if you had thought there was anything unfair. What good would it have been to gain a prize unfairly?'

'I am afraid it would have been good to me. I sha'n't be able to make you understand, but why did you get help, if you only care to gain the prize fairly?'

'I did not get it on purpose, it came by chance—just little things I heard that fitted in.'

'It was very little help, then, and not unfairly gained.'

'Why,' cried Rose, noticing a little clouding of her companion's face, 'you did not hope it was a great deal, and unfairly gained? You did not hope I had been mean?'

'Oh no, no, I hope not; but I am afraid being too anxious does make one mean. I so wish I could help it. I so wish that the people I am obliged to please did not care so much for success and prizes, and refuse to believe I am working unless I gain them. I am sadly afraid it will make me mean in the end; but I shall always think of what you did to-day. I wish we were in the same class.'

‘So do I,’ said Rose, ‘I think I should like you.’

‘And I am sure I should like you. My name is Mary Graham Papillon—I know yours, and shall not forget it. Now I must go, or I shall miss my omnibus; but perhaps we shall see each other again some time.’

‘I hope we shall, and I hope you will get that medal as you want it so much. I had rather have a big girl like you for a friend than get a prize even.’

‘I wish I was as independent of prizes. Perhaps Mr. Henderson will tell you how it is with me; he knows all about me, and he is very kind to me. I almost think he proposed this prize that I might win it. Good-bye—here is your governess coming in, so I suppose it is four o’clock.’

‘We must never call her the alpaca umbrella girl again,’ Rose said to her sisters and Lucy Fanshawe, as they were walking home; ‘her name is Mary Graham Papillon, a lovely name, I think; and only imagine her coming to me and saying she wished we were in the same class—a girl with turned-up hair, who sits on the front bench with the Moncrieffs.’

‘Rose has taken a fancy to her,’ said Lucy Fanshawe a little sharply. ‘She is going to set her up as another new friend, and all because she brings a horrible Mrs. Gampy umbrella to the class with her, and never brushes her hat; and cares so much for a stupid, fusty old prize medal that she condescends to wheedle Rose into giving it up to her. I must say you are easily pleased, Rose; there is not much satisfaction in being your friend, if such attractions as this can draw you away.’

Rose protested against the charge of fickleness, but was a little troubled by it nevertheless, and remained rather thoughtful during the rest of the walk home. ‘Was it silly to like people easily,’ she wondered, ‘and to be interested by little things that let one into their stories, or was it a right feeling, the drawing near to help the fire to burn brightly, that Mother Ursula had spoken of? At all events, she could not help being glad that the alpaca umbrella girl had sought her out and given her a nice name to think of her by; it would prevent any little grudging regrets that might have crept in, with further thought of the great pleasure she might have had in showing the prize to her mother and Claude.’

The doctor’s carriage was standing before the door when the school-room party arrived at home. The elders of the house were evidently pre-occupied, for no questions about the class were asked, and nothing was heard or seen of mamma or Aunt Rachel, who was now staying in the house, till after tea-time. While the children were at tea in the schoolroom, a message came that they need not dress to go into the drawing-room that evening, as mamma was tired, and would only see them one by one for a few minutes before they went to bed.

‘How lucky!’ cried thoughtless Maggie, ‘for as we have no lecture to write out, we shall have a long time to amuse ourselves before dark. Let us borrow Willie and Trotty of old nurse; I daresay, as the weather is so warm, she will let us take them and Rose’s bag to the attic stairs, and have a real good play at Swiss Family Robinson. What makes you look

so grave, Rose; you are never going to be above Desert Island play because you have written a long essay?'

'Oh no, no,' said Rose. 'I should like it of all things if only I knew that mamma was not worse.'

'Doctors come to make one better,' observed Maggie cheerfully, 'and mamma likes it. I heard grandmamma say one day to Aunt Rachel that she believed there was nothing mamma liked better than fussing about health.'

'Oh, Maggie, you must have misunderstood, and you should not repeat such a thing about mamma.'

'Well, I mean no harm,' said Maggie indifferently; 'it was what grandmamma said, and if mamma is to be ill, we may as well hope she likes it, and that it is as grandmamma thinks, more fuss than anything else. Let us go to the nursery and borrow the little ones before it gets too near their bed-time.' The attic stairs were shut off from the rest of the house by a substantial door, which, when closed, deadened the noise made behind it; but this evening Rose was not satisfied with this security against her mother's being disturbed, but did her best to keep the game quiet, and brought it as quickly as possible to the point of—'Being evening when the shipwrecked family, having provided themselves with shelter and food, gathered round a fire made of spars from the wreck, and beguiled the time by telling stories to each other.' This was the point at which Florence, and even Claude and Lionel, would sometimes condescend to join the game; and strict rules had been laid down to secure that every member of the family should contribute their share to the entertainment, from Heinrich, the youngest child, represented by Willie (Trotty, not being able to speak plainly, had to play the inferior part of a tame seal), up to the father and mother, Rose and Claude, from whom the longest stories were expected, and who spoke last. Heinrich had just had his oyster-shell filled with boiling soup, and after taking several imaginary sips, and looking about him a good deal had begun.

'There was once a king, I think he was a giant too, but I am not sure, and he lived in a place a very long way off, and he was very rich and cruel, and people were very much afraid of him, but I was not at all afraid. I was a schoolboy then, bigger than Claude, and very strong and courageous. Even the masters of the school I went to were rather afraid of me, and I only did just as much lessons as I liked. So I told the masters one day that I intended to go and kill that cruel king, and they said I had better not, but I went, and I took several of the biggest boys who were friends of mine with me, and we had swords and pistols, and other things to fight with. So we got to the house, a palace it was, there were gold steps to it, and the hall was paved with silver, and there were soldiers, and cannons, and lions, real ones, on the steps, all looking very fierce. My friends and I did not mind them, of course; we marched past them with our pistols, and got up to

the part of the palace where the king sat on a throne made of something brighter than gold, but I don't know what it was called exactly. This was the worst king that was ever heard of in the world; he squinted, and he had besides one eye in the middle of his forehead.'

'Oh, Willie!' interrupted Florence; 'you got that out of Claude's last story about the "Giant in the Cave," and we are *not* to tell things over and over again.'

'Never mind,' resumed Willie; 'my king had an eye in the middle of his forehead, and he had another in his chin, too, and one on each of his cheeks. There, now! He was not like the giant in the cave; he was a great deal uglier and crueller. The people and children who lived in that country, and even the big school-boys, were very much afraid of him, and hardly dared to play at cricket, or so much as fly a kite, for this wicked king kept in his palace quantities of policemen and school-masters, the worst sort, and dentists; and if any boy in the town only screeched on his slate with a slate-pencil, he sent a policeman to bring him to the palace directly, and ordered him to have a double-tooth out.'

At this thrilling point of the story, a knock came at the door of the attic stairs, and Aunt Rachel, after fumbling a little with the latch, which was stiff, opened it and looked in.

'Rose, my dear, you are wanted downstairs, in the drawing-room, to speak to your father. I have been looking for you everywhere for the last ten minutes. What does possess you all to crowd together on this close dusty staircase, when you have nice large rooms and ample space in other parts of the house to play in?'

'But there's no other place in the house that can be made to look half as much like a desert island,' said Maggie. 'Aunt Rachel, do look up to the top landing, and you will see, leaning against the banisters, the quantity of beautiful sugar-canes we've got. The Father and Fritz brought them up out of the housemaid's closet, when they explored the island. Stair-rods, you see; was it not a clever idea to bring them for sugar-canes? they are so exactly like, and those little wooden soap-bowls, turned upside down, make capital cocoa-nuts, don't they? The things beyond are a basket of yams and prickly pears, and the enormous crab that Ernest caught in the creek. We are keeping those for our breakfast in the morning; and just look down there on the lowest stair, that is our pond where we get our fresh water; it's the nursery looking-glass on its back. Does not it make one almost thirsty to look at it, it is so like real water? That was Rose's thought.'

'It is hard to take her away from the enjoyment of such luxuries,' said Aunt Rachel; 'but I am afraid she must come. Perhaps papa will not keep her long, and she may be back before a desert island night is over; in time to eat those yams and cocoa-nuts for breakfast.'

'Yes, come back as soon as you can, Rose; it is about the essay you are sent for, and we shall want to hear all about it,' said Florence. 'Would you like me to go with you?'

‘No, Rose is to come to the drawing-room alone,’ said Aunt Rachel.

Maggie had actually forgotten all about Mr. Henderson’s promised visit; and Rose, who had not forgotten, and who had been a little nervous all through the merry play, felt grateful to Florence for her sympathy and offer of countenance; it was one of those unexpected kindnesses with which Florence, in spite of her jealous temper, would now and then surprise people.

‘Papa is not angry with me, is he, Aunt Rachel?’ Rose asked, as she was following her aunt downstairs, and thinking there was something unusually grave in her manner.

‘No, my dear, not angry, because he is sure that you can give a satisfactory explanation; but at present it seems as if you had been saying something about him in public that was not correct.’

‘O Aunt Rachel! but indeed I did not. I tried to speak the truth as well as I could.’

‘Then there is nothing to be afraid of; only take care to make your explanation clear, now. I am sorry that you will have to speak before several people, but it can’t be helped. Papa was in the drawing-room when Mr. Henderson called, and he was taken there.’

‘Who else is there, Aunt Rachel?’

‘Lady Dunallan and Mrs. Fanshawe; but you need not think about them; they are talking to mamma. Let us enter at once.’

Rose heartily wished herself back in her desert island among the sugar-canes. A year ago she would have felt still more alarmed at the prospect of being cross-examined by papa, and having to repeat something she had said to him, but now she was used to talking to him, and knew he would help her through if she got into a tangle. She hung back just a minute, and said to herself that she would remember it was only speaking to papa, and that she need not mind who else was listening; and then she followed Aunt Rachel into the room, and walked bravely up to the window recess where her father and Mr. Henderson were sitting together.

Professor Ingram held out his hand to her, but he looked grave and a little annoyed.

‘Come here, Rose,’ he said, ‘and tell me, my dear, how you came to say that I helped you to write your theme for Mr. Henderson. I should be a very unfit person to be a teacher myself, if I were to interfere in such a matter with other people’s pupils. I don’t think I even knew the subject of your theme till it was finished. How could you say that I helped you, and that Professor Mason helped you? Speak slowly and clearly, Rose.’

Rose, profiting by the hint, took a minute to arrange her thoughts, and then said quietly, ‘Mr. Henderson asked me if the thoughts in my essay were quite my own; if I had talked the subject over with anyone.’

‘Well, my dear, you had not talked the subject over with me, or with any of my friends, that I am aware of.’

‘It was one evening in the drawing-room, when mamma took off her silver bracelet to show it to Professor Mason, and some other gentlemen. They talked a great deal about coins, and Professor Mason explained to me why money was called money, and you said that the word was a telescope. That made me ask you to let me write my theme in your study ; and as almost all the thoughts in my theme came into my head that evening from what I heard, I felt that I ought to say I had been helped when I was asked if it was all my own.’

‘You meant no other help than that ?’ asked Mr. Henderson.

‘Oh no, indeed ! But you know, sir, you said it was because the ideas were not taken straight out of books that you liked my theme, and gave it the prize ; and as I *heard* everything, don’t you think it was the same as if I had *read* them ?’

‘No, not altogether ; there are different ways of hearing, and of reading, too, for that matter ; and my chief business, as teacher, is to show you how to hear and read rightly. Go on hearing with fairy ears, that can turn the waifs and strays of conversation into jewels worth storing, and you will earn much better rewards than this little prize, which is fairly yours now ;’ and Mr. Henderson drew the red case from his pocket, and handed it to Rose.

She hesitated, and Professor Ingram took it instead, and opened the case.

‘Ah ! a Persian Daric ; a very pretty beginning of a collection of coins, if you choose to make one, Rose. Well, my dear, why don’t you thank Mr. Henderson ? Speak out if you have anything on your mind.’

Rose began eagerly. ‘Oh, I don’t quite know ! I am very much obliged to Mr. Henderson, and I should like to have the prize, but—Mary Graham Papillon——’ and then she stopped short, rather afraid of going on with what she had it in her mind to say.

Mr. Henderson came to her help.

‘Do you know Miss Papillon ? Is she a friend of yours ?’

‘Not till to-day ; but to-day she spoke to me, and told me that you were very kind to her, and that she thought you would be glad if she got the prize.’

‘I should have been glad if she had deserved it, and I expected her to win it, as she is the most diligent of my pupils, and generally writes the best exercises of every kind. I certainly thought of her and wished her to carry off a mark of approval that would have served her with the relative who undertakes the expenses of her education, and who, being altogether an ignorant person, is not satisfied unless she constantly brings him proofs of diligence that he can understand.’

‘Miss Papillon, did you say ?’ asked Professor Ingram. ‘Is it the daughter of Papillon, the analytical chemist, who died the other day from some accident that occurred in the course of his scientific researches ?’

‘It was more than a year ago ; this is his eldest daughter ; and he left

a large family in poor circumstances. An uncle has undertaken to pay the school expenses of the eldest son and daughter—not that he has much respect for a liberal education; but hearing they are clever, he hopes to put them in the way of earning money quickly, and helping on the younger members of the family. The mother lives in constant dread that he will repent of his generosity, and take the boy and girl from school to put them to inferior occupations; and nothing satisfies him of the wisdom of his present course of conduct so effectually as when the young people bring him tangible proofs of diligence, in the shape of scholarships or prizes.'

'I think,' said Professor Ingram, 'I have heard Claude speak of a young Papillon, who runs a very close race with him for the head of their classes at B—— College.'

'That is Mary's brother, a very good boy, who, though not much of a student by nature, works like a dragon for his mother's sake. I am afraid your son's successes at Christmas were heard of with some grudging and heartache by Mrs. Papillon and Mary. Their boy had done his best, and his abilities are considerable; but in their straitened home he lacks the opportunities for self-improvement that come as a matter of course to your children.'

'As far as the boy is concerned, I don't see how we are to set that straight,' said Professor Ingram thoughtfully; 'public rewards and honours must take their course; but this seems to me a more private occasion, where perhaps circumstances that don't usually come under a teacher's notice may be allowed to weigh. What do you say, Rose? Mr. Henderson is so kind that I believe he will allow you to have a voice in the decision. It seems really to have been something like an accident that your theme was the best, Miss Papillon having given more study and thought to hers. Are you disposed to join me in asking Mr. Henderson to take this into consideration, and let her have the prize?'

'Yes, papa, indeed I am!' cried Rose.

'Then it shall be so settled,' said Mr. Henderson, rising with a look of great satisfaction on his face. 'I am going to Mrs. Papillon's this evening. I will take the little case with me, and tell them what will give them all pleasure. Mary will have something to show her uncle when he calls next Sunday, and perhaps this little triumph of hers will so satisfy him as to lessen his anger, should Claude again gain the first prize over young Papillon's head at Easter.'

'And then perhaps,' said Rose colouring with eagerness, 'Mrs. Papillon and Mary may not grudge Claude his successes so very much.'

'I can't quite promise that, the stake is so great to them; but I think I can promise that the name of Ingram will not sound so disagreeably in their ears as it has done hitherto.'

'We must take care that it does not,' said the Professor. 'We must think of some ways of making it pleasant. The orphans of a man who

lost his life in the pursuit of science have a claim on us all. I had thought of inquiring about the family before, but other things put it out of my mind.'

'For the future your daughter and Miss Papillon will meet at the college. Easter is so near that it would be useless to make changes, otherwise I should put her up into my first class at once. She will belong to it after the holidays. She is young, but she quite deserves the promotion.'

The Professor looked pleased at this, and soon afterwards Mr. Henderson took his departure, and Mr. Ingram got up and left the room.

Mrs. Ingram then called Rose to her, and making her kneel down by the sofa, kissed her hot cheeks and stroked them with her thin hands. 'My darling child,' she said, 'I was afraid for you that you would be shy at having to explain to Mr. Henderson before papa. It made me nervous till I heard you get on so well, and then I was happy, for I saw that papa was quite content with all you said.'

'You should not have been nervous,' said Aunt Rachel a little impatiently. 'It is such a pity you agitate yourself about every trifle. No wonder you are tired out long before the end of the day. You really ought not to know anything that passes in the house just now.'

'But I must so long as I am in it,' said Mrs. Ingram gently. 'So long as I am with my children I must know all that concerns them, and feel with them in all their little joys and troubles. Even if it hurts me I must do that as long as I can.'

Rose laid her cheek softly against her mother's, and old Mrs. Fanshawe, clearing her voice as if something made it rather husky, said, 'Well, I hope they all know how important it is that you should never have anything but pleasure from them. No one would wish to keep you from hearing pleasant news about them, such as this of Rose's nice essay, and I feel sure she will take care there shall be no worries for you to hear of.'

'I will, yes, I will, as far as ever I can,' Rose resolved, and as her heart swelled with love towards her gentle mother, whose sympathy seemed to grow closer and more precious every day, all temptation to vanity and self-satisfaction in what she had done passed away. It was nice to have pleased papa and Mr. Henderson, and to be put in the first class with Mary Graham Papillon and the Moncrieffs, but oh, what did anything signify compared to saving mamma pain or being of use to her? Mrs. Fanshawe, by way of giving a cheerful turn to everyone's thoughts, began to repeat Lucy's praises of Rose's essay, and to expatiate on the dreadful loss it would be to her when Rose was advanced to a higher class, but the flattering words that would have been dangerously sweet a few minutes ago hardly made any impression on Rose now. She was thinking too much of her mother to care greatly for praise of herself.

Aunt Rachel interposed at last with a request that Rose might be allowed to get back to the desert island. 'I should think,' she said, 'that quite twelve hours of desert island time have passed since Rose left, and the mother of the family must be sadly wanted to cook those

yams for breakfast, and throw the prickly pears into hot water, to take off their stings. Jack and Fritz will get into dreadful trouble if she stays away much longer.'

'Yes, yes, let her go,' said Lady Dunallan, 'I have a scheme in my head which I came to propound this evening, but I think I will talk it over privately with Aunt Rachel, and learn if she thinks it likely to produce pleasures rather than worries, before I go further into it. It is not important enough to interfere with the cooking of those yams anyhow.'

When Rose got upstairs, she found that nurse had been to reclaim Willie and Trotty, and that Lionel and Florence had deserted the game. She did not, however, greatly regret the break up of the Swiss Robinson family, for it gained her half an hour's quiet chat on the attic stairs with Claude, during which he confided to her several interesting little particulars about school affairs that he had never mentioned before, and was drawn out into giving an exact description of Maurice Papillon, his rival in class and his chief friend, whose striking likeness to his sister Rose proved to her own satisfaction. 'Red hair, you say,' she inquired anxiously, 'but not at all an ugly sort of red, is it? And eyes, just the soft shiny colour of horse-chestnut skins, and a mouth shut close, as if it never would be opened unless there was something particular to say.'

'Why yes, I declare it is, but I don't think I ever particularly noticed the colour of Papillon's eyes. Why should I?'

'I can't think how people can see without noticing. You say *his* clothes are not shabby. I dare say Mary can better bear to look queer herself than to let him look queer; that is nice in her. Mr. Henderson called him her younger brother, so they can't be twins.'

'What does it signify?'

'Oh, I don't know, only it would have been nice for them, I should think, if they had been twins, that's all. And you are sure Maurice Papillon does not grudge you your prizes, or feel sore about it?'

'Not he, fellows are not such fools. They take their chance, and when a thing's all fair, they make up their minds, and care no more about it.'

'But the mother and Mary, I suppose, can't help caring. Claude, is not it nice that we shall always have the Papillons to talk about now, you and I? I am so much obliged to you for all you have told me.'

'Well, take care, then, not to talk about it to anyone else, or to me again till I begin. I am very glad you have got to know Papillon's sister, it will be a fine thing for you, and I shall have no objection to talk about them if you are careful, but now I must run off to the study. I've leave to work there in the evening till the exam., and I must make the most of it. I daresay Papillon has been grinding for hours already.'

'I wonder what Lionel does with himself now we so seldom go into the drawing-room of an evening, and you are working so hard,' said Rose. 'I wish he would come to the school-room, but he says he hates the Fraulein. Do you know where he goes, Claude?'

'He's a fool,' said Claude, 'and he will find himself in a beautiful fix

when the exam. begins, if he does not take care. I've said all I can, and if he chooses to be an idiot it's not our business.'

Rose was not so sure of this. She lingered about on the staircase after Claude left her in hope of coming upon Lionel, and persuading him to settle down to some quiet game with her in the school-room, but it was not till close upon bed-time when she saw him emerge from the door opening on the back stairs, and he answered her so sharply when she asked where he had been, that she did not feel encouraged to pursue the subject further.

A WINTER STORY.

IX.

These strange woes stole on tiptoe as it were,
Into my neighbourhood and privacy,
Sat down where I sat, laid them where I lay.

Browning.

RACHEL, who, the instant the others had left the house, had caught up her basket and escaped with a lack of valour of which hardly her worst enemies would have accused her, was, woman-like, adding a little curiosity to her fearfulness, and holding a door somewhat ajar in order to watch her master on his return. But the dusk that was rapidly closing in gave her no opportunity of catching so much as a glimpse of his face; and all she heard was the echo of his steps as he passed slowly along the passage to his room. Sending up Ronald a little later, when Ben had come in with a ravenous readiness for his supper, the boy brought down a message that they were not to wait for Mr. Oldfield, without any word of further explanation; and Rachel, divided between relief and disappointment, could only compensate herself for the unusual tremors of the day by exercising an additional tyranny upon her companions.

There is something so sacred in all trouble which touches the inner springs of a man's nature, especially of a nature so sensitive and delicate as Philip Oldfield's, that it gives even an imaginary spectator an air of harshness and irreverence to stand by and attempt to watch its workings. Yet it would have been more wholesome for him if he had not so long succeeded in shrouding it from view. The very compassion from which we shrink, the very sympathy which seems coarse and heavy-handed, is not without its use. If it is not oil to the wound, it is wine. If it does not soothe, it hardens for the wear and tear that must come. Nothing—at least after a time—can be so hurtful to the sorrow it seems to protect as the burying it deep, where, if indeed no touch can jar upon it, so neither can wholesome air nor sunshine reach it with their sweet healing. And so exquisitely is each part of our being connected with the other, so rapidly does each thrill it experiences communicate itself throughout the whole, that it is impossible to preserve one part in this unhealthy torpor without the rest becoming affected in the same way. The misfor-

tune which had so sadly maimed Philip Oldfield's life, need not have crushed it, would he have allowed it to be otherwise. Always readily moved by impulse, the impulse of weakness which urged him to fly from the face of those upon whom he had brought this grief, he had suffered to overmaster him until he had become its slave. Persons who so yield are not even helped by the consciousness of their weakness. Instead of inciting them to struggle, it steals from them more strength, and the numbness creeps over them with deadlier certainty, because they believe themselves powerless to resist.

It will, therefore, readily be conceived that to this man, who shrank from any touch of his sad heart, the sight of Hester, once so dear, could give nothing but exquisite pain. The stir of life in a benumbed limb is almost agony. A throng of tender recollections, which he had shut away out of sight, trooped forth, and brought each of them an added pang. But yesterday he would have said there lived no sadder man upon the earth, and now yesterday looked to him like departed peace.

He had some thought—if thought it could be named which passed so fleetingly through his brain—of attempting for a second time to escape from what he called to himself the avengers of blood. Once before he had hidden himself from men's faces for this purpose in the solitude of the old farm, and it might now be possible for him to steal away again, and make a fresh resting-place which should not be invaded. But the weakness which had sapped his life had naturally lessened his energy, and he felt bitterly that he lacked even the necessary force to fly.

Failing this, his mind took refuge in that inactivity which was becoming so dangerous and insidious a foe. He would do nothing except bury himself a little deeper in the darkness. The sight of Hester had brought with it so sharp a pain, that at this moment avoidance of her seemed the one thing left for him to desire. And it was, if not a curious, at least a sad result from his thoughts having been so driven inward and forced to prey upon themselves, that they did not now occupy themselves with any sympathy for or even understanding of Hester's own feelings; and the very course which to some people might have appeared to offer a sort of reparation for the sorrow he had wrought, he would have shrunk from, shuddering, as an additional wrong.

Even now—with that refusal to accept comfort from the outer world which made so gloomy a contradiction in a nature which instinctively craved for comfort—it gave him a kind of satisfaction that the evening had closed in upon him, and that the wind as it rose drove with cold blasts against the window. But after a time, and in spite of himself, the chill struck so painfully through his nerves, that he went down to the kitchen, and, refusing the meal which Rachel pressed upon him, sat in his usual place by the fire, and appeared, to bury himself in his books for the remainder of the evening.

So wild a night had not been felt at the farm for years. A south-west storm, rushing up from the sea, found little to check it in the low hills

which formed the only barrier, and raged so fiercely even among the valleys that only Ronald slept soundly and undisturbed by its fury. In the morning the wind was still high, driving northwards an angry turmoil of grey clouds, and creaking mournfully among the Scotch firs. Rachel went forth with grievous prophecies of ill, and it showed a great disturbance in the ordinary course of events that Ben, as he followed her from one place to another, ventured to grumble a remonstrance.

‘There’s the house standin’, and a’ the chimleys. Whativer next d’ye expect to find blowed away, mis’ess?’

‘Not yer wits, because they went long ago,’ retorted Mrs. Cæsar, promptly.

‘Come now,’ Ben said, unheeding, in his ponderous voice, ‘there ain’t no need to go into the stable. It’s past breakfas’ hour, an’ I’m as leer as a crack’d egg-shell. Door’s shut. D’ye think the wind ha’ carried off the mare through the key-hole?’

Ben’s unusual sarcasm came to an unexpected end. The padlock, which his wife was about to unfasten, dropped from her hand as she touched it. With a sudden misgiving she flung open the door. Ben, peering over her shoulder, rubbed his eyes. Whether his suggestion offered any solution or not, certain it was that the stall was empty, and the chestnut mare gone.

Mrs. Cæsar’s first impulse was one of triumph,—perhaps because the events of the past weeks had somewhat shaken that confidence in her own powers which formed the leverage necessary to bring them into play, and she hailed in the loss a re-establishment of sagacity. She drew a long breath, and turned upon her husband much as a small terrier will face a mastiff.

‘An’ who’s right now?’ she said. ‘It ain’t no good to look in the stable, ain’t it? The house an’ the chimleys is a’ we’ve a got to see after, surely!’

As for Ben, the most withering retorts would have fallen harmlessly upon his head. He stared at the empty stall with an utter incapability of realizing more than the astonishing fact that the mare was not there. His wife’s quick wits had gone far in pursuit of the thief, before his thoughts had made the feeblest attempt to put the how and why of the disappearance into shape, and she was provoked at last into giving him an impatient poke.

‘Well?’ she said, sharply.

‘Ye might knock me down wi’ a feather, mis’ess,’ he said, deliberately.

‘An’ what ’ud be the good o’ that? What a fool ye are, to be sure, Ben,’ said Rachel, contemptuously. ‘If I warn’t here to look a’ter you, I do believe they might come an’ steal the head off yer shoulders, and ye’d niver be the wiser. Put two and two together, if it ain’t too much for you, an’ tell me where the mare is now?’

Her husband looked at her with an expression of the blankest vacancy.

‘Where her is?’

‘Ah.’

Thus driven to an unlooked-for demand upon his intellect, Ben walked slowly into the stable, and stood regarding the empty stall from a nearer, although not more satisfactory point of view, so far as any answer presenting itself to Rachel’s question. Two other horses turned their sleek heads and watched him with stolid dignity: the grey light struggling through a small square window, fell coldly on the walls and on the empty stall, and the wind whirled little bits of straw along the stones. Rachel’s satisfaction began to be quenched in a sense of what they had lost.

‘The ches’nut mare! If the rascal had taken one o’ the others, it wouldn’t ha’ been near such a bad job,’ she said, with the usual preference for any form of trial to that which is sent to us. ‘But ye might trust Jack Dykes or any o’ his lot for pickin’ out the best.’

‘Jack Dykes!’ repeated Ben.

‘An’ ye mean to say ye wanted me to tell you that much!’ said Rachel, looking at him from head to foot. ‘Well, ye men are daft, poor creatures! Now, Ben, ye’ll just swaller yer breakfas’ in a twinklin’, an’ walk over to Redmoor an’ set the perlice a’ter him. They may catch ’im yet, if they’ve an ounce o’ sharpness between ’em. An’ ye may tell ’em it’s no more than I’ve looked for this month past—ever since ye were soft enough to let ’im walk about here as if the place were his own.’

Mrs. Cæsar’s importance was fully restored to her that day. She bustled about the farm, and hectored the policemen who came over to see the empty stall, and to gather what crumbs of presumptive evidence could be offered them. It surprised her a little that Mr. Oldfield should enter into the matter with a keener interest than he had for some time displayed. It would have been more consistent with his usual conduct had he placed it in other hands, and been content to regard it from an apathetic distance, more particularly after his depression of the previous night. But he, too, it is probable, felt the need of restoring some lost balance within himself. The shock of meeting with Hester, the dim vision that floated before his eyes of what he might have been—that saddest ghost the past can send to haunt us—the consciousness of his want of strength; all these impressed him freshly and painfully with their weakness. Once set working, his mind naturally used its habits of introspection to track its latest discoveries like a mole. And it gave him at once an escape from such dreary researches, and a new feeling of satisfaction in the rebound, to take steps for the discovery of the thief.

The robbery had been skilfully effected; but when they came to be examined, it was found that the difficulties in the way were not very great. The principal gate of the farmyard, it is true, was locked, so that although a man might have climbed over it, a horse could not have been led out. But there was another gate leading into a field, which was only protected by a twist of withies, and the safety of the farm animals depended chiefly upon the padlocks of their sheds and the vigilance of

Watch. It was evident that the stable padlock had been opened by a duplicate key, and as to Watch, although Mr. Oldfield himself owned to a belief that he had heard him bark, the hurly-burly of the night was sufficient to drown the sound, or to account for the dog's uneasiness. Suspicion pointed to Jack Dykes, more from an unlimited readiness to trace all evil-doings to the Ponds, than from any solid foundation for Rachel's assertions; and yet, perhaps, her positiveness had a greater effect upon the minds of those concerned than they would have been willing to admit.

'Whatever should he ha' come here for else?' she said boldly. 'He knowed well enough as I were out o' the way, an' that he could turn Ben over as easy as a pick 'll turn a stone. Warn't he out there by hisself, peerin' a' about the place, and what were that for if it warn't for mischief? Why, there niver were one o' they Ponds people as were up to aught else. It do drive me wild when folk can't so much as see what lies before their very noses.'

'Well, we'd better go over to the Ponds, and find out what they're up to, just now,' said one of the policemen to his companion. It was an expedition not unfrequently made, but the men preferred going in pairs.

'Let me go with them, Rachel, do,' said Ronald, pressing up to Mrs. Caesar.

'Ye be quiet,' she said, giving him a little push. 'Ain't this trouble enough wi' out yer puttin' in yer share?'

'I likes to see the boy pluckin' up a bit o' spirit,' she confided later in the day to Ben, 'but it gives a body more of a handfu' to look after. Miss Hester yesterday seemed to bring Miss Isabel an' a' of 'em up again, till it most crazed me.'

'Did she tell about her?' inquired Ben, lifting his hat and rubbing his forehead with his great hand.

'Tell!' repeated Rachel impatiently: 'she niver saw her to do it. But there's more than words, there's looks and little ways as tell. Times I think the very dead sticks has got hold o' things somehow as you niver thought to hear on more, an' throw 'em up at you. There's snow i' the air, the wind's got round, an' it's as cold as can be; ye'd best send long Peter to look after the sheep; he's that lazy, he's done nought but gossip about th' house a' day.'

To say the truth, Rachel's feelings wound themselves into a knot of complicated doubts when she thought of Miss Lyle. She had always cherished a hope that when some turn of the wheel threw Mr. Oldfield once more in the way of the old friends he had so persistently avoided, the meeting would have the power to work a revolution, a cure, call it what you will. The meeting had taken place, and the result was a failure. It may be that she did not sufficiently estimate the disturbance it had wrought, but at all events, he had repulsed those who came to seek him and to try to draw him back, and so far her expectations had ended

in disappointment. And yet—was it disappointment or relief? Certain it is, that if Hester's effort had been successful, Rachel would have endured sharp pangs of jealousy, and it would have seemed a wrong that her faithful labour of so many years should only have led to another reaping the harvest.

In the evening the snow began to fall, and by the morning it lay thick upon each possible resting-place. Everything was wrapped in that deep hush which it is hard to reconcile with so much visible movement. The sky is dark with fluttering flakes, but the noiseless stealth of their fall, the gradual muffling of all usual noises, the pallor and the deadness of life, impress one as something supernatural and unreal. Dark oaken corners in the old kitchen were lit with a reflected light, the carved face looked strangely forth like a ghost awakened out of time. Mr. Oldfield, always sensitive to external influences, shivered and could hardly withdraw himself from the fire on which Rachel heaped logs of wood with a generous hand, while Ronald ran cheerfully about the yard, now helping Peter to shovel avalanches off the roofs, now carrying hay to the cows, now encouraging Watch to bury his grey nose in the snow and toss it up with quick joyous barks, and altogether regardless of Rachel's exhortations from the door.

Her patience was more tried a little later in the morning by seeing one of the policemen enter the yard and communicate his news to Ben and Peter.

'It takes 'em all day to tell what I'd ha' done within a twinklin',' she said to herself; 'an' Ben knows I've such a hoast* I daren't go out. Here, Master Ronnel!'

But for once the advantage was on the side of the much-enduring Ben, and it was not until he had slowly digested the news that Rachel learnt how valuable an auxiliary the snow had proved, and how Jack Dykes and the chestnut mare had been laid hands upon at Barworth, some twenty miles away from the farm.

X.

It was the splendid winter-tide,
And all the land was thrilling white,
And all the air was still and bright
With a solemn and songless sunshine wide,
Whose gorgeous uncongenial light
Harden'd whatever it glorified.

Fables in Song.

In the afternoon Ronald caught hold of Mrs. Cæsar, as she was hurrying through one of the long cold passages with a bunch of herbs from the drying-room.

'Rachel!'

'Well, whatever d'ye want now?'

'Can't I go over to the parsonage? She asked me.'

* Cough.

'She?—an' who's she? Call her Miss Lyle, if ye don't mean to lose the last o' yer manners. No, ye can't. I'm not a goin' to have you dug out of a snow drift.'

She said it rather from a spirit of contradiction than any more definite reason, for the snow was no longer falling, and carts had been passing up and down the lane. And she suddenly drew back her words.

'Well, go along then; but mind what I told you about yer uncle, an' come home before it gets dark. Have ye done yer lessons ready?'

When she was satisfied on this point she let him go, and he was soon running down the snowy lane. Not a breath of wind was stirring to break the deep silence, only a few little birds chirped despondingly from under the bushes. Everything was folded in a thick spotless covering at once beautiful and repellent; all colour was blotted out of the world, except sharply etched contrasts of black and white. The river crept sluggishly under the little bridge, from which icicles were hanging, the delicate dark traceries of the trees were mapped out against a grey sky; presently Ronald came to the parsonage gate, and ran in, choosing the unbroken snow by the side rather than the path that had been swept through the middle of the drive. He might have been seized with shyness, but that Finie, catching sight of him through the nursery window, rushed down to drag him in.

'Aunt Hester said p'waps you'd come. That's Bwamble. You needn't be afraid. He's a very good dog. He'll come up and have tea in the nurs'wy if you do, wiff me and Tid. He likes toast best. You may come into the drawin'-room,' continued Finie with majestic patronage. 'Here's the little boy, Aunt Hester.'

Hester was sitting at the window, looking vacantly at the cold white world. A younger lady with a pale but sweet face sat nearer the fire working. It was a picturesque home-like room, which closed round the two figures as if it belonged to them, and out of which pretty things grew instead of dazzling you at first with flash and glitter. When Hester heard Finie's announcement she started a little, like a person awakened out of a dream, rose up, and went quickly across the room to give Ronald a tender kiss.

'And you have come through the snow to see us?' she said; 'we must make you all the more welcome.'

She spoke cheerily, but sighed a little when she had spoken, and looked at her sister; Agnes's face was quivering, and her work had fallen on her lap. She stretched out her hands with a kind motherly gesture.

'So you are Ronald Carr? Finie never knew what a right she had to you as a playfellow.'

'He's a very nice boy,' assented Finie, with a general sense of satisfaction. 'I shall show him my new doll. And he may have tea in the nurs'wy, mayn't he, mamma, wiff me and Tid?'

Ronald was looking round him with curious eyes, not thinking much of his young admirer, but conscious somehow of a home feeling about the

pretty room, which he had never experienced at the farm. He was not so much attracted by Hester, who stood looking down upon them with an absent trouble in her eyes, as by Mrs. Claughton's grave gentleness. She made him stand by her side, although Finie fidgeted impatiently, and talked in a low voice of his mother, of his school, and of his home in London. By and by she spoke of Mr. Oldfield. Ronald answered all her questions freely, but presently Hester, who had not moved, came and put her hand on her shoulder.

'Don't, Agnes,' she said in a low constrained voice.

Mrs. Claughton glanced at her, and called Finie.

'You shall take Ronald upstairs now, and show him all your possessions, Finie.'

'Oh, I am so glad, 'cause Tid is waiting,' said Finie, jumping. 'Do you know what Tid says? He says he is going to save up his money to buy a sea-side. He's never seen the sea, you know, and he thinks he can buy one. Isn't Tid a funny boy?'

Ronald and Finie, and Bramble, the brown spaniel, went away together, and Hester made a step towards the window; then, as if the desolation outside repelled her, turned suddenly, and, with a swift passionate gesture knelt down and laid her head upon Agnes's knees. For a few moments neither of them spoke, while Agnes softly stroked her sister's hair.

'Dear,' she said presently, 'did it hurt you? I wanted to hear all that he could tell us.'

'That was it,' said Hester, with a ring of pain in her voice. 'I could not bear it. When he has hidden himself away from us all in a solitude so sad, it seems like irreverence to try to break in upon it. If we could draw him from it——'

'Perhaps I was wrong,' said Agnes anxiously. Hester lifted her head and took her hands into her own.

'No, you are always right. It is only that when I remember the other day I feel too helpless and despairing to know what is best to do. If you had seen his face! Agnes, when such a persuasion seizes on a man's life, as it has done on his, do you not think it must have truth in it? Otherwise do you believe God would permit it?'

Holding her sister's hands as she spoke, she tightened her grasp so much in the intensity of the question, that Agnes could hardly repress a cry of pain. She waited a minute or two before answering, and then said slowly—

'Dear, why not? He permits us to be tried in many ways, but He means us to help one another through all. You and Austin would not stand by and see me suffer without trying to relieve me, yet you and I both know that the suffering is God's trial. Poor Philip has so long nursed his trouble, so long kept his eyes fixed behind him, that his mind has grown morbidly unhealthy, and it is very hard to know how to help him. Only I do believe we are the best people to do it. And I believe more, I believe that we are sent here for this very purpose.'

Hester gave a sigh of relief.

'You believe that,' she said, letting her hands drop.

'Yes, dear, I do.'

'But—how can we get at him?'

'Wait. There is sure to be a way.'

Hester put her arms round her, and drew down the pale face to her own.

'Ah, Agnes,' she said softly, 'you are braver than I, after all.'

'Not braver, but perhaps more patient. And it is easier for us than for you.'

'I wish that you could see him. If only I could bring him here to the side of your chair, he would understand more clearly; you always make things clear. And I could think of nothing but ourselves—of what I told you I should be able to put away out of my mind. O Agnes, what a fool I was! I could think of nothing else, I was obliged to remember.'

'That was the first time,' said her sister soothingly. 'I did not believe you would find it possible. You did all you could; do not fret yourself over what was the best act of friendship you could have shown him.'

Hester rose up and went to the window.

'I meant it to be so,' she said, coming back and standing a little behind her sister's chair. 'I think when I went to the farm I felt nothing except pity for his poor wounded heart, and the longing to help him somehow. You know, Agnes, for we talked of it all often enough during those weeks when we waited and hoped that he might come; but when I saw him again, though he was not the same man, it was not pity that I felt; it was the old days leaping up as if these long years had not gone by—as if I were still young,' she added, with a sad smile at herself. 'Did you think I could have been so silly? It has taken away all my courage and trust in myself. It seemed to me as if I ought not to have been there—as if I could never bear to go on with what we had agreed.'

Her voice died away in a trembling sob. A sad little gust of wind rising at the moment answered her with something that sounded like an echo. A sleety rain was beginning to fall, and the melting snow dripped dismally from the roof. The very power of Agnes's sympathy made her the more keenly alive to the depression of the day; she shivered, and turned a little from the window.

'Let us stir the fire, and not see that dreariness,' she said.

'But the dreariness is there,' Hester answered, without moving.

'And so is the fire. It depends which way you look,' said Agnes softly. 'Dear Hester, both Austin and I are sure you were right. It is not like you to pull your actions to pieces. Are you going to be unhappy because you thought so much of poor Philip, that you put yourself aside?'

'No,' said Hester, suddenly coming before her, with something of a

smile. 'I am not going to think at all. After all, that is the only way; I am going to see the children, and to send Ronald back to the farm, before the rain becomes heavy.'

It seemed as if she would not hear any more. She kissed Agnes, wrapped her shawl more closely round her, stirred the fire into brightness, and went away with her firm direct step to the nursery where the children were in possession. Bramble, a valetudinarian puppy, demoralized by good temper and good living, came and laid his beautiful brown head in her hand. Ronald had built a wonderful brick erection upon the floor, round which Tid was capering and shouting, while Finie sat and delivered architectural orders with quaint gravity.

'He doesn't know how to build a church, Aunt Hester,' she said regretfully. 'Churches don't never have points to them, I know, for my papa's never did. But he can make houses. And he can draw, too. He draw'd Tid just like him, only he put his wrong side out. I should like a woof now, if you please, little boy.'

Sometimes it takes a very little thing to bring to life the hope which we thought to be long dead and buried out of sight. A bird's song or the smell of a flower will do more than all our reasoning: even sorrow revives it now and then. Hester's heart flung off its load as she looked at the children in their innocent play, a little wave of gladness swept over it. Perhaps these little waves come more readily and tenderly when youth is past. The heart makes no such imperious demands for perfect joy, a lesser bliss contents it. Poor Hester, as Tid's warm arms closed round her, felt a thrill quite disproportioned to the occasion. And Ronald, who was here, was Philip's nephew. It was a link, after all, such as she had not had for years.

The boy had been far too much excited over the robbery at the farm, not to have retailed it at full length in the nursery. Hester heard it for the first time, with some wonder how it would affect Philip, for she could not imagine that he would face the publicity of a trial.

'He stealed the horse. He was a very bad man,' said Finie, with her conscientiousness much shocked.

In the evening when Mr. Claughton had come in, and they were all sitting in the bright drawing-room, the subject was again mentioned.

'What do you suppose, Austin,' said his wife anxiously. 'Will Mr. Oldfield be induced to prosecute?'

'I should say, no. I very much doubt his having either the energy or the inclination, but I should consider it rather a hopeful symptom if he surprises us by taking up the matter.'

Hester said nothing. She was sitting in a low arm-chair by the fire, so that its light fell upon her; her work had dropped from her hands, she was looking silently at the blaze that leaped and faded. The hope that had sprung up that day, as it were from the very ashes of the past, still lit her eyes with a gladness at which Agnes wondered. A warm light trembled on her cheek, on the clear cut features, the beautiful resolute

mouth—the years which had gone by had taken nothing of her beauty, but rather added a certain tender charm which was wanting in the old time. It puzzled her a little that the past should have grown into such strong relief in these last two or three days. She had declared to herself that it had never lost an outline, and yet it had suddenly flashed into life. She had gone back to her home: Philip was there, she heard his voice, with its dreamy cadences at which they sometimes laughed; she saw the pretty old garden, the great rhododendrons sweeping the grass, ah, how much more came forth from those strange chambers which a chance touch will often unlock, whether we will or no. Her heart was so full that she was crying softly, unconscious of her tears, and yet there was a sweet gentle expression in her eyes where the tears were shining. That little scene in the nursery, which had so little to do with all her hopes and fears, had, quite unreasonably, sent a warm glow of comfort straight into her heart. There are many messengers that bring it to us, not knowing what balm they carry. And it is a merciful Hand which leads them our doors.

(To be continued.)

THE CHARLEMAGNE ROMANCES.

BOIARDO.

WHEN Orlando arrived at the shore of Morgana's lake, he beheld there, in the place of Arridano, a lady passionately weeping over a dead dragon. She finally clasped the monster tenderly in her arms and carried it into a boat. Whilst he was marvelling what this strange sight might mean, another lady, accompanied by a squire, rode up, and seeing him called him by his name with every sign of rejoicing. This latter lady turned out to be Fiordiligi, who had been vainly searching in all directions for her husband. She had received bad news from Rocca Silvana, their home, that an enemy had besieged and taken the castle. The squire who now accompanied her was the castellan, who had escaped to seek his lord. This same person was he who had stolen Brandimart in his infancy (as Fiordiligi now informed Orlando) from his father Monodant, the king of the Distant Isles; the very king who, rendered unjust by much misfortune, whilst seeking for one lost son, was unconsciously holding the other in severe imprisonment.

Orlando now sought the entrance to the Fata Morgana's demesne, and finding it, saw lying there yet the golden seat which had proved such a source of temptation to Rinaldo. On entering the garden he found the fairy rejoicing over the resuscitation of Ziliante. She had changed the fair youth into a dragon, to be the guardian of her lake instead of Arridano, and either from horror at his now frightful shape, or from the too great potency of the enchantment he had died upon relinquishing his own form. The count, who had learnt wisdom by former experience, now took the

fairy by the forelock without loss of time, whilst she was still occupied with Ziliante; and despite her magnificent offers, tears and prayers, compelled her to relinquish her prisoner.

Returning with Ziliante to Fiordiligi, who had spent the time of his absence in prayers for his success, they all three, together with the squire, set out for the city of king Monodant.

They found the quay lined with spectators who had come to welcome the return of the young prince. But when it came to the turn of Fiordiligi's squire to land, he was recognised at once, and his name 'Bardino' passed from mouth to mouth. And now came the *dénouement*. The king turned away, ashamed, at Orlando's eager inquiry for Brandimart, and perceiving Bardino, to avoid the question, he angrily demanded what he had done with his eldest son, Bramadoro. Upon this the discovery that Bramadoro was one and the same with the imprisoned Brandimart was soon arrived at, and the old king with a mixture of shame, grief, and joy, which quite overmastered him, embraced both his lost children.

At the banquet which ensued, the princess Leodilla, who appeared radiant in magnificent apparel, was recognised by Brandimart, her brother, as the lady of the camel-adventure who had healed him of his wound.

After a period spent in rejoicings, jousts, and festivities, all the knights once more set forth on their travels; Orlando and Brandimart with Fiordiligi for Albracca, Rinaldo with the others for France. These latter all reached their destination in safety, with the exception of Astolfo, whose good looks, in this instance, proved anything but an advantage to him. For unfortunately the knights came upon the fairy Alcina, a sister of Morgana, 'fishing'—luring all the strange inhabitants of the sea by her spells. Angry at being discovered thus employed, she thought at first to drown all the intruders; but Astolfo's beauty pleased her, and so she enticed him to trust himself with her upon a seeming island. But the island was in reality a huge whale, which had been drawn to the shore with the rest of the fishes by her incantations. Rinaldo dashed into the water after his cousin on Baiardo, who swam 'like a galley,' but Dudone, following on his heavy steed, would have been drowned had not Rinaldo turned, and, lifting him out of the saddle, borne him to land. The paladin would have pursued his hapless cousin even then but for the entreaties of the rest: and as so much time had been consumed in the rescue of Dudone, they saw the whale already disappearing in the distance. Astolfo was therefore given up for lost; and sorrowfully and lingeringly his friends left the shore.*

Orlando returned to Albracca, where Angelica received him with the most flattering caresses. But her heart is still with Rinaldo. She therefore persuades the besotted Orlando that it is his duty to return to France,

* Astolfo does not appear again until near the end of the poem, when a knight leading a chained giant is introduced. This knight is not named, but Ariosto identifies him as Astolfo, and promotes him to much greater dignity of character and office than has been his portion in the pages of Boiardo.

whither, she tells him, so great is her love for him, she is prepared to accompany him. The knight is ready to do her bidding—irrespective of duty—whithersoever it may lead him; Brandimart is ready to follow him to death; and Fiordiligi will never forsake Brandimart. Accordingly the two couples set out in a state of peace and harmony which made their journey an excursion of pleasure, till it was interrupted by the pursuit of the besieging army of Torindo. Brandimart stopped to check this pursuit and was thus separated from his party. Orlando and his fair companions were next assailed by the Lestrigonians, a cannibal race, whose king Anthropophagus struck down Orlando from behind as he dismounted to ask for food at their table. The ladies fled at this sight and were hotly pursued. Orlando on recovering his senses killed Anthropophagus and rescued Angelica, but could not find Fiordiligi. But happily, just as her horse gave in, the latter was discovered and saved by her husband. She told him with tears that she had seen Orlando killed, and, with a sorrow which threw a damp upon the happiness of their reunion, they went to seek his body.

On their road they were met by Marfisa, who had at last given up the pursuit of Brunello. She was now in female attire, for, her horse having fallen dead, she had ever since followed Brunello on foot; and, being greatly weakened by having fed only on grass and leaves, she had, despite her vow, taken off her armour that she might run the lighter! But a fancy now takes her that she will have Brandimart's armour; and so, with much vile abuse, she seizes Fiordiligi, who has recognised her with very justifiable terror, runs up a steep ascent with her, and threatens to dash her helpless victim down the precipice unless Brandimart gives her up his horse and armour upon the spot! Brandimart, knowing her relentless nature, dares not irritate her by attempting to reach her whilst she thus holds his dearer life at her mercy. His armour is not worth a moment's consideration on such an emergency, and he hastily pulls it off, whilst the termagant, having thus procured what she wanted, scornfully relinquishes the half-dead Fiordiligi. Brandimart, however, soon replaced his losses, for he found the dead body of Agrican (which has been guarded intact and incorruptible by angels), and though with great compunction, and only after receiving a sign of consent from the dead man, he invested himself with his armour. He took a horse from a robber who attacked them, and thus equipped afresh, travelled onward. They had ascertained that Orlando was not killed, by the fact that they discovered not his body, but those of the whole tribe of Lestrigonians, who were made into such 'mincemeat' as only Durlindana could have achieved. They were now therefore on their route for France. On their journey, Brandimart meets with several adventures, amongst others he delivers a fairy from her serpent state* by kissing her, very much to his distaste, on the horrible

* There is a curious legend concerning the fairies, that they could not die; but that at certain periods they were obliged to assume the form of serpents. This legend appears to be very ancient, for we meet with it in classic garb, and also in northern myth.

gaping mouth, which threatened to swallow him whole. She, restored to a far pleasanter form, returns the favour by enchanting his horse and armour. He also sets free a damsel named Doristella, who turns out to be Fiordiligi's own sister,* and who leads them to her father's kingdom of Liza. On their road they are attacked by Fuggiforca (Fly the gallows), the very thief who had stolen Fiordiligi in her childhood, and sold her to that same patron of child stealers, the Count of Rocca Silvana, who had bought Brandimart.† Perodia, Fiordiligi's mother, recognises her by a birthmark, and there is general rejoicing throughout the kingdom.

From Liza Brandimart and Fiordiligi embarked for France; but they were driven by contrary winds upon the African coast. Here Brandimart thought it but prudent to conceal the fact of his Christianity; whilst as the son of King Monodant he was courteously received by Agramant, with whose army he crossed over to Europe.

The Saracens had made sad havoc of the Christian armies since the first mad landing of Rodamonte. This terrible scion of the race of Nimrod, disgusted with what he considered the frivolous delays caused by the search for Ruggiaro, and the sending for Angelica's ring, had resolved to invade France on his own account! He therefore marched to the sea-shore; but was delayed by contrary winds for a month. Furious at this unreasonable conduct of the weather, he at last set sail in spite of winds, waves, storms, and everything else which might be supposed to influence an ordinary mind. Two-thirds of his fleet were wrecked, but that mattered little to Rodamonte! He landed on the Italian coast, and speedily defeated the army of king Desiderius. The French now coming up to reinforce the Italians, he left one army to be met by his generals whilst he attacked the other singlehanded, and worsted it!

It is in this battle that we are first introduced to Bradamante, Rinaldo's sister. She was a great favourite with the emperor, who gave her a prominent command; she long kept the Saracens in check; but in an encounter with Rodamonte her horse was killed under her, and falling partly upon her kept her down. Rinaldo, however, fortunately arrived from his travels before Rodamonte had entirely routed the Christian armies. His appearance effected a diversion; moreover, Rodamonte was so struck with the fact of finding a warrior who was a match for himself, that missing Rinaldo in the battle, and inquiring of some Christian prisoners what had become of him, he was, by some mistake, informed that the paladin had gone to Ardennes. Upon this, Rodamonte, without giving a thought to his army, rode off at full speed to seek Rinaldo! The latter was really in the meantime driving Rodamonte's troops, discouraged by the loss of their leader, towards the sea. He arrived at the coast in time to see Dudone carried off prisoner in a galley but not in time to rescue him. Hearing, therefore, that Rodamonte had gone to Ardennes in search of him, and the enemy being utterly routed, he in his turn followed Rodamonte. But instead of discovering the object of his search at Ardennes, he was

* Doristella's history is very similar to that of Leodilla, and not edifying.

seized and beaten 'within an inch of his life' (though the chastisement was inflicted with rods of lilies and scourges of roses) by that offended liege-lord of all true knights, the God of Love, for his non-requital of the love of Angelica!* This episode seems rather out of character with the rest of the poem, but it was necessary to the machinery of the plot to involve Rinaldo and Orlando in fresh disputes, and to make Rinaldo once more a rival, even though not a favoured one, for the love of Angelica was the most effectual way of doing this.

Orlando with Angelica now appear once more in France. They had met with little adventure on their journey westward. They embarked at Beyrout, but stopped at Cyprus for a joust, where Orlando, from prudential motives, described himself as a Circassian named Rotolante.† After a stormy voyage they landed on the shores of Provence. Of course they passed through the forest of Ardennes, and here Angelica accidentally drank of Merlin's fountain. She immediately conceived a hatred of Rinaldo as intense as her love had hitherto been.

Rinaldo, who as we have seen had been with great severity brought back to his allegiance, now met them, but did not recognise his kinsman owing to the crest he still bore as Rotolante. He therefore addressed Angelica in a style but little pleasing either to her in her present frame of mind, or to Orlando. A fierce quarrel ensued. Angelica, as usual, fled from the clash of arms and was met by Oliviero with part of the French army. He led her to Charlemagne and acquainted him with her news, that Orlando and Rinaldo were not only both returned to France, but were now engaged in a desperate battle in the neighbouring forest.

Overjoyed at the return of the wanderers, Charlemagne and all the other paladins hastened to separate the combatants. The cousins put up their swords on the appearance of the emperor, who received them with open arms. But Angelica again took to flight at the hated sight of Rinaldo, and both the knights galloped after her and recommenced their battle. This time the emperor was more cautious. He gave the fair cause of so much mischief into the hands of the aged Namo; but, in order to ensure the best services of these two all-important champions on the occasion of the battle he was expecting with Agramant, he promised her to whichever of them should most distinguish himself in the field.

* It was esteemed a fault worthy of condign punishment in the "Courts of Love," holden in the days of the Troubadours, not to return love for love.

† The story of Lucina and the terrible ork is too long for insertion here; and it has nothing to do with any of our principal characters.

(To be continued.)

WOMANKIND.

CHAPTER XX.

FRIENDSHIP.

FRIENDSHIPS are very sweet when they have grown with our growth and strengthened with our strength. Happy the children who have gathered blue-bells together in the woods, and confided little plans to each other in almost infancy, discussed their favourite heroes of history, and wandered over life in long scrambling walks, or cosy nooks in girlhood, and brushed their hair at night in deeper conversations as they grew older. They may drift apart in after life, but they have a fund of precious recollections, ever green, and a love for one another that nothing can break.

It is quite possible that their original characters may be such that if they had only met in after life, they would never have *made* friends ; but having begun from mere contact, they go on, and are perhaps more helpful to one another than if they had chosen each other from the first.

Some people do not approve of childish friendships, and think that children of different families only make one another naughty, and that girls gossip folly and write nonsense. I can only say that such mothers can never have had a real child friend of their own. Indeed where sisters are nearly of the same age, and of dispositions that *fit* into one another, they do not want external friends ; and large families sometimes cling together and condemn all outsiders as interruptions, if no worse ; but this is not universal, and often while one pair of sisters hang together, sufficing one another, and quite inseparable, another girl in the same family is left to solace herself with a friend, and would be forlorn without her.

As long as a mother has her daughter's confidence, and chooses well the families with whom to be intimate, there is no reasonable fear of harm being taught ; and as to correspondence, the children may waste time and write nonsense, but no one will ever write an easy pleasant letter in after life who has not acquired the art of lively use of the pen ; and if, as is usual, the letter is the family show, there cannot be harm in it. Still it ought to be the rule that only girl friends should be written to—not boys, except brothers. It is much safer both in childhood and later to exclude even cousins. As to the showing of letters, when the child begins to outgrow the triumphant delight of asking every one all round the house to read the great despatch, the wisest way is to live in confidence and honour. The mother should read all interesting portions of the letters she receives to the rest of the family, and the girls will imitate her, and generally bring their letters to her as wanting her sympathy, and having no secrets from her. She can safely tell them that if their friends object to this, they cannot be good friends ; but as they grow older, some discretion and consideration become needful. A brother will sometimes confide to

a sister what he will not tell his parents ; and all hope of good influence would be lost if he knew his letter would be public property. Or a friend may have to tell what it would not be honourable to disclose. Thus after the girl has become formed enough to deserve trust, it should be understood that she has the right to keep back any part of her correspondence that she may choose.

Indeed, some natures are so much more reserved than others, that what seems only kind sympathy to one is offensive curiosity to another, and they must be dealt with accordingly ; though the tendency that some girls have of making friendship consist in whispering secrets about nothing cannot too soon be laughed at and censured.

A mother can and should have her daughter's fullest and deepest confidence, but she cannot be quite instead of a friend to her, because there is a certain equality required in friendship. What the girl wants is neither a wise counsellor, nor a playfellow to share the ebullition of her youthful spirits, but a kindred spirit who can look at the world from the same point of view, and has hopes and fears, guesses and fancies like her own. Her mother has tried it all—it is not new to her ; but the friend sees with the same eyes, and a little bit of experience gained by one in advance is a delightful addition to the stock of common ideas.

Some friendships are drawn close by a sharing of pursuits. Studious and intelligent girls have very happy discussions over their opinions and their favourite characters, and when they have a turn for romance (in its high sense) they live in a world of chivalry. Or who does not recollect the Sunday evenings of comparison of taste in hymns, and puzzles over passages in the *Christian Year* ? And when the affection is really valuable, there will be deep and earnest discussions, clearing the mind of difficulties by mutual help, and working out theories or entering on all the questions, trite and vexed to elders, but new to the young. These are the 'blissful dreams in secret shared, serene or solemn, gay or bold,' that 'last in fancy unimpaired,' and which are some of our most delightful memories.

Friendship has the highest sanction. Love, as it has been well noted, deepens and intensifies by being exercised on those in immediate contact. It is a mistake to think that shallowness enables it to spread wider, or that the glow is less diffused for being warmest near the centre. He whose Love is universal had one friend above all, and gave His human affection to those who were with Him ; and His type and forefather after the flesh wins our hearts by that noble and unselfish friendship which has been a proverb through all time.

It has been said that women are less capable of real friendship than men, and certainly historical friendships, such as existed between even Greeks of the higher type, do not appear to have been known amongst women ; but this is because woman in her degraded state, uneducated, and only her husband's foremost slave, was incapable of more than gossip and rivalry with her fellow-women. Friendship could not begin till

woman was refined and elevated, and then her first friendships were with men, such as that of Paula with St. Jerome. It requires that the woman should have a mind and soul going beyond the actual interests of dress, marriage and family, in order to have substance enough to make a real friendship with man or woman. If she have not, it is in girlhood mere tittering and chattering in a corner; in maidenhood, petty gabble about dress and lovers—often jealous and always foolish; in later life, either scandal, or the baby and cook stories that are supposed to prevail over tea-tables. Woman will talk, and talk to her like, but one woman will have a gossip while the other will have a friend.

And it is the early years of youth and character making which decide whether the playfellow shall grow into the friend, and in which fresh companions are gathered, and assimilate into friends, whose origin has still the brightness of the golden age; the link, as Eugénie de Guérin says, may still be of garlands.

These friends are made more by choice than by contact, like those of childhood. Two or three families of cousins or neighbours will pair in and out according to their idiosyncrasies, their likenesses or dissimilarities, finding sympathy for the different needs of their natures. Or a friendship will begin between two widely divided in age, where the fond and devoted allegiance on the one side is all that can be given at the time in return for sympathy, guidance, and assistance often most precious.

It is hardly possible to give advice about making friends. They come, and we become knit together for joy and mutual aid, and also for pain. We cannot give our hearts without giving them for grief. Love must have its passion. When we *really* make friends, we take on ourselves a share of all their perplexities and troubles and sorrows; and unless our affection has grown cold, parting and pain and death must wring one heart or the other.

Thus far it is safe to counsel. Do not be drawn into a friendship by adulation or flattery. If you have any little advantages of wealth or position, and a person disapproved by your family, or your better sense, tries to become a hanger-on by admiration of what nobody else honestly approves, or by fostering what you know to be unadvisable and underhand, steer clear of her as a tempter. Again, if one less well off than yourself is outspoken and honest in her criticisms of you, and will by no means condone your faults and follies, you may safely trust her as an honourable friend, likely to do you good.

Or if you be the less well endowed, be careful that you do not deceive yourself as to the attraction on the other side; and take care that you do not suppress your real opinion for the sake of the lift in the pony-carriage, the invitation to the party, or the mere honour of intimacy at the great house. These things sound so mean that it is an insult to be cautioned against them; but there is a certain glamour in the pleasure of intercourse with grandees, and something, too, in the ease of their manner, which *does* sometimes hinder those associated with them from knowing

in themselves that toadying temper they would condemn in the abstract. If the world do not come in and spoil it, I do not myself see any harm in what is called an unequal friendship. It is not unequal if the two minds and souls really chime together, and if there is fair giving and taking of counsel on either side—no patronage on the one side, no cringing on the other; and it has this great advantage, that it spares both sides from narrowness by giving the one an insight into the class feelings of the other, and preventing them from being utterly alien to her.

The really unequal friendship is where one side is the 'better' in age, in experience, in mental endowments, and then the interchange of sentiments is of infinite value to the inferior in these respects, who seems to have nothing to give but her devotion and her little services, but who really gives the freshness of her unjaded mind, and an opening of the doors of sympathy with the younger generation, while she herself wins the benefit of support and aid in her own difficulties, and assistance in knowing and forming herself such as can hardly be appreciated by those who have not felt it.

Mutual understanding seems to be the ground-work of friendship. Young people are apt to think they have met with such comprehension on over slight grounds, and to link themselves together with an eagerness that may slacken. In fact, every friendship has after the very first a time of proof and trial. After finding where they agree, people have to find out where they disagree, and whether the disagreement be such as to hinder them from the necessary sympathy with each other. Then there is to come the trial of confidence, and whether each side can trust the other, or is worthy of trust. The power of keeping a secret has to be tested. Absolute secrets are not so very many, and it is easy to know what to do about them; but one use of a friendship is to be able to talk over impressions or perplexities that it would not be well to publish; and judgment has to be continually used as to what—without being absolutely sacred—it would be unkind, treacherous, or inexpedient to repeat to some persons, though it might not be so to another. Those who cannot exercise such discretion are not fit to be friends, and, though they may be pleasant companions, cannot be more.

Again, a person who is full of frivolity and idleness must be kept in check; and those who actually tempt to disobedience to parents, disregard of principle, or contempt of religion—either in practice, faith, or observances,—should be given up as a duty. If a parent have a strong dislike or disapproval of a daughter's friend, it is a matter of right to give up the intercourse; but girls often get into trouble with brothers by open-mouthed vehemence about friends. The boys have a certain amount of family jealousy and love of teasing, and greatly resent being bored with too much mention of their sister's friend, unless they adopt and engross her themselves to the exclusion of the original proprietor.

As to correspondence, the gift of letter-writing is unequally distributed even among educated people. It is a pain and penance to some and a

solace to others. Some, in writing to their dearest friend, can only mention the subject in hand; others can pour out facts and opinions, criticisms and comments, making the pen another tongue. It is really as if some nerve of communication guided the fingers of one, and was utterly wanting in another.

To my mind, letter-writing is too valuable a gift not to be cultivated. A friend who will correspond is three times the friend who can or will not; and the value of this bridge over separation is untold. Besides, a detailed letter to an invalid, or to one whose home is in a colony, is priceless, and such letters are not to be composed without an apprenticeship;—not of writing model letters, but of correspondence with friends or brothers. A letter describing an interesting scene, or giving a sketch of what is passing, gives not only great pleasure to the receiver, but deepens the impression on the writer's mind, and may even become a valuable record; but the real point is the participation in an enjoyment that it gives those at a distance, even delighting a colonial exile, or making sunshine in a sick-room or a lonely life. A real discussion of right and wrong can often be well carried out on paper, and both sides will have their ideas cleared by thinking them out. Depend upon it, there is selfishness as well as carelessness in neglecting letters. For the infirm, and those who cannot answer, a time should be fixed for a regular letter, and no one can guess how these are looked forward to. Even the smallest home details of flowers, pet animals, children's witticisms, pretty sights in country walks, have their charm and value. Look at the life-long correspondence of Mrs. Grant of Laggan with Mrs. Smith of Jordan-hill, Elizabeth Carter with Catherine Talbot, and see how much pleasure and profit, how much real elements of friendship there is in letter-writing; and do not come down to slap-dash notes and postal cards.

Life-long friendships! Yes, they are a precious gift—often the dearest tie of single women. Happily these are many. True friends should always mention one another in their prayers, and thus the tie becomes like that of brothers in arms of old. Montalembert dedicated his friendship in early youth with a short prayer and mutual vow and Communion together. We could hardly overtly do this; but surely we do feel that to kneel together at the Altar may sanctify and make permanent the love in our hearts, bear it above little misunderstandings, restrain us from being mutual temptations, and if death be to part us early, help the one who is taken to be to the other 'the pure, calm picture of a blameless friend,' and make Paradise seem nearer and more homelike. While, if the two are to run out nearly all the span of their lives, such friendship may be the joy of their lives, their meetings may be holidays, their sympathy and support each other's strength; they may improve one another 'as iron sharpeneth iron,' and the higher light of love of God may grow, as Dante says, 'as light increases, by flashing back and back again the radiance of the sun from one mirror to another.'

(To be continued.)

PAPERS ON SISTERHOODS.

XV.—CHOICE OF OBJECT.

WHEN it is borne in mind that the twofold course of instruction laid down in the three preceding papers as necessary for candidates in the religious life deals only with generalities, applying equally to all sisterhoods, and that nothing has been said as yet concerning special training for communities, with definite work of one kind, it will be acknowledged that the three months of absolute seclusion, recommended at the beginning of the new Society, is all too little for the work that is to be crowded into it. It must be understood, therefore, as a minimum under very favourable circumstances of capacity in the teachers, and aptitude in the pupils, and it is very desirable to extend the time considerably, if it be possible to do so; albeit the two sorts of training ought to go on continuously through the whole existence of the community, so long as any fresh candidates present themselves for admission.

But when the foundation has been laid securely in this fashion, it is needful to build upon it the particular training demanded by the objects of the Sisterhood; just as special preparation for a profession comes at the close of a school or university course. Until the members of a projected community have fully decided what their special duties shall be, it is well nigh impossible for them to form any distinct plan as to the manner of being fitted for discharging them. And the answers to be given to inquiries on this head will vary according to two conditions. Is the community set on foot for the sake of enabling its members [to live a Religious Life?—or is it founded as a charitable organization to do certain specified active work, on the ground that Sisters can do such work more effectively than seculars?

Observe, the question is not whether the projected Society is to be contemplative or active. I assume throughout these papers that the policy which has prevailed for more than two centuries in the Western Church, of founding none but active orders and congregations, is certain to continue for a long time, and that whatever contemplative element is introduced will be in subordination to the active duties prescribed. But there will be found a wide difference in character between a community in which the religious family is the first and dominant notion, while the good works in which the family engages are only *details*, and one which is founded, like the Hospitallers and the Ursulines, primarily to do certain work, and secondarily to do it as a religious body.

The first of these is the higher conception, but the second is far more popular and usual; and therefore it is most probable that new Sisterhoods will generally owe their foundation to a desire to grapple with some instant and crying need. A city where all the hospitals are ill managed and

nursed, where fallen women abound, or where no adequate religious instruction for girls is attainable, is likely to have a nursing, a reformatory, or an educational Sisterhood started in it. Whatever the object may be, it will never do to begin by carrying it out by rule of thumb, trusting to the chapter of accidents to avoid any very fatal mistake at first, and to picking up experience enough by dint of practice to go on with tolerable credit afterwards. If the Sisterhood is to be a nursing body, its intending members must learn the business under medical instruction in hospitals; if it is to be educational, they must study the art of teaching from professors in normal schools; if it is to be reformatory, they must strive to acquire such a competent knowledge of discipline and moral government as will enable them to obtain influence and ascendancy at once over their charges, instead of undergoing ignominious defeat in all the earlier months of the undertaking.

It would be well, no doubt, if the members of a projected active Sisterhood could invert the order of study, and learn their secular tasks thoroughly first, before entering on the close companionship in religious instruction described already. And, in fact, this is exactly what should be done when the Society has once been firmly established, and has grown into a real community. Then, every candidate should be called on to prove her sincerity and her aptness by submitting to undergo professional training in places and under teachers indicated or approved by the authorities of the Society, before being lifted from the grade of applicant or postulant to that of probationer or novice. But this is hardly feasible at the first foundation of a new body. In that case, as already pointed out, the religious training must have priority, and the secular or professional courses will succeed it.

Where the higher view of a Religious House is taken, and the new Society is founded chiefly in order that women may live together under rules for the practice of holiness, a question will naturally arise almost immediately as to what kind of charitable work shall be selected for the members to engage in habitually. In that case, the choice ought to be decided by the compatibility of the two objects. It is clear enough that there are certain kinds of work which, by making demands on time and attention at once incessant and irregular, and by making close intercourse amongst the members of a Society very intermittent, if not altogether unattainable, militate directly against the observance of rules, and the full development of the Religious Life. Foremost amongst these stands penitentiary work, and next after it hospital work.

While it is perfectly true that no persons can exert so much influence over the class for which penitentiaries are designed as Sisters do; and also that the revival of the Religious Life in England is mainly due to interest in the reclamation of the fallen, nevertheless it cannot be truly said that the measure of success achieved by penitentiary Sisters has been at all proportionate to the cost and zeal engaged in their work, or to the results obtained in other fields of labour. The truth is that no adequate

solution has yet been found for the perplexing dilemma which confronts adventurers in this enterprise. If a stern, rigid, prison discipline be adopted, and the penitents see in their guardians only austere gaolers and taskmistresses, the result is to spread a general dread and horror of Refuges and Penitentiaries amongst the class for which they are designed, so as to prevent entrances, and, what is much worse, to induce even in those who do enter a wild reaction back to vice and excitement the moment external restraints are removed, and this in an enormous majority of those who pass through the ordeal.

On the other hand, if a very gentle and lenient policy be pursued, a not less formidable peril must be encountered. Not only is there a high probability of weakening the sense of sinfulness amongst the penitents themselves, but all that numerous body of women who, without any strong religious convictions, are yet supporting themselves in respectable poverty, often very pinching, by incessant and exhausting toil, have actually a premium held out to them to plunge, like their unhappy sisters, into a vortex of sin, on the plausible ground that they will have, at any rate, a brief time of luxury, perhaps of wealth ; and when they choose to abandon their bad courses, are certain of being taken up, made much of, and petted by excellent people who never thought of stretching out a finger to aid them or encourage them when earning a hard and precarious, but honest living as needlewomen or in domestic service. This is simply a bonus offered for the increase of the class which penitentiaries aim at extirpating. For these reasons, apart from the extraordinary difficulties which penitentiary work puts in the way of observance of Rule, it is the least eligible kind of occupation which can possibly be selected by a Religious society which has not yet chosen its field of labour.

As, however, there can be no question that work of this kind sorely needs to be done, these strictures are not intended to stay the hands of any who feel themselves specially moved to undertake it, but only to inform such as have no decided call to undertake it that there are more hopeful and, humanly speaking, more useful occupations open to them.

Hospital work, though yielding far more certain and definite results, is not much more favourable to community life, except in the rare cases where the hospital is itself a part of the conventual buildings, and entirely under the control of the community. Where the Sisters are visiting nurses only, or are under the control of a secular committee, the difficulties in the way of their religious observances are considerable, though the amount of useful help they can give the patients is not affected. Therefore, unless a projected Sisterhood can found its own Hospital, or unless one with suitable buildings for its use can be made over to it, this kind of work is not the best to choose ; though, as in the former case, its importance and interest are far too great for any persons to hesitate in taking it up if they feel a definite call to do so.

However, *preventive* work is at once more valuable to society and more compatible with the strict observance of rule than any kind of *curative*

work ever can be, and therefore it is towards this species of occupation that the plans of founders had better be directed.

Industrial schools, parochial guilds and classes, middle and higher schools, and all the machinery of home-mission work, supply an ample field of undertaking for more Sisters than the entire Anglican Church now possesses, and are entirely free from the disadvantages attending the other spheres of labour described.

It is needful to repeat here the warning given in an earlier paper, that there is a very wide and important difference between a Sisterhood of Home Missionaries, who are ready to do parochial work in every parish committed to their charge, sending one or more Sisters from the Mother House to organize and superintend other workers, and a Parochial Sisterhood limited to providing for the needs of one single parish, which latter must, sooner or later, prove a disastrous failure, unless it deliberately abandon its whole programme, and submit to be reconstituted on an entirely different footing.

When the new Society has chosen its work, and begun to prepare for its efficient execution, a fresh element must be introduced into the religious teaching of the Sisters, dealing with the sanctification of work, and the true realization of Christian sympathy and fellowship with the suffering.

The former of these lessons will not only tend to enforce neatness and thoroughness, in order that the offering may not be a maimed or blemished one ; but will also correct an idea apt to plant itself in many minds, that only a certain very limited range of occupation is capable of a religious character, instead of the truth being that there is hardly any active employment whatever, not essentially evil in itself, which may not be undertaken and carried out for the glory of God.

The second will do battle against a yet more subtle form of error, which induces too many persons engaged in benevolent works to regard sufferers, not as brothers and sisters in need of a loving and helpful hand, but simply as subjects of experiment, and as raw material for the manufacture of certain spiritual advantages for those who minister to them, and who expect to climb to heaven by walking on their backs. Wherever the false doctrine of a bargain with God creeps in, Sisters will be found hard, stern, unloving, and repellent in their dealings with the poor, and though they may give all their goods to feed them, and die at their posts in hospital or prison while serving them, yet having not charity, it profits them nothing.

(To be continued.)

WHAT CAN WE DO ?

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DISOBEDIENT CECIL."

WHAT can we do for those who mourn
Through long unhappy years ?
How can we bid the smiles return
That have been quench'd by tears ?
'Twere vain to point to blossoms new
While thorns impede the way—
Then is there nothing we can do ?
Ah, yes—ah, yes—
Can we not always pray ?

What can we do for those who sin,
Needing our succour most ?
How can we strive the souls to win
That are already lost ?
'Twere vain to soothe with words untrue,
Or threaten hopes away—
Then is there nothing we can do ?
Ah, yes—ah, yes—
Can we not always pray ?

What can we do for those who doubt,
Or God's own Word reject ?
How can we root the errors out
Of misused intellect ?
'Twere vain to dream a human clue
Can rescue minds that stray—
Then is there nothing we can do ?
Ah, yes—ah, yes—
Can we not always pray ?

What can we do for spirits weak
In dark temptation's hour ?
How can we give them hearts to seek
And strength to use the power ?
'Twere vain to hope for fresh'ning dew
Beneath the sun's hot ray—
Then is there nothing we can do ?
Ah, yes—ah, yes—
Can we not always pray ?

What can we do for those who sink
'Neath sickness' weary weight,
Yet may not pass the happy brink
That leads to heaven straight ?
'Twere vain to say their pains are few,
Or bid their hearts be gay—
Then is there nothing we can do ?
Ah, yes—ah, yes—
Can we not always pray ?

What can we do for those who know
But triumph and success ?
Whose lives in sparkling measure flow,
Whom earth conspires to bless ?
'Twere vain to tell when pleasures woo
How brief may be their stay—
Then is there nothing we can do ?
Ah, yes—ah, yes—
Can we not always pray ?

What can we do for those we love,
Whose lives with ours entwine ?
How can we best our friendship prove,
How most their needs divine ?
When skies no more are summer-blue,
When youth and life decay,
Will there be nothing we can do ?
Ah, yes—ah, yes—
For we can always pray !

THE
MONTHLY PACKET
OF
EVENING READINGS
For Members of the English Church.

OCTOBER, 1875.

THE SCHOOL OF THE CROSS.

It may not be generally known that a play is being performed this year at Oberammergau, entitled *Die Kreuzeschule—The School of the Cross*—consisting of scenes from the Old Testament, in a dramatic form, and *tableaux vivants* from the New, thus inverting the order of the Passion Play. It is divided into six parts, each representing a type and the anti-type, and intended to enforce some point of Christian duty.

The words of the prologue, epilogues, solos, and choruses have been published at Weilheim, and in the accompanying translation the several metres have been carefully followed. It has been found impossible to translate *literally* from a language possessing a dozen rhymes to our one; but the meaning has been given as faithfully as poetic rules would allow.

The following account, published in the *Guardian* of August 3rd, will enable us to fill up the blanks in the *libretto*, and understand how the drama is worked out. The scenes of Abraham's sacrifice are taken from one of Metastasio's sacred dramas. The whole has been arranged, and partly composed, by the venerable priest, Herr Daisenberger. The music is partly derived from well known sources, partly composed for the occasion by the excellent schoolmaster, Kirchenhofer, organist of the church, and leader of the orchestra at Oberammergau.

Extract from a letter in the *Guardian* :—

A play will be acted at Oberammergau every Sunday, until the 10th of October inclusive, with the following scenes and *tableaux vivants*. The performance is in consequence of the gift of a Crucifix (or, strictly, 'Kreuzigung-Gruppe'—group of the Crucifixion) by the King of Bavaria, which is expected shortly to arrive from Munich.

Prologue, and introduction by the Choir.

Tableaux, representing children kneeling around a Cross.

Scene I.—Cain's jealousy of Abel. The parents effect an apparent reconciliation.

Tableau.—The Cleansing of the Temple. The Pharisees are jealous of Christ for His reception by the people. (The choir sings during the exhibition of the *tableaux*.)

Scene II.—Cain kills Abel in a field, where he has lured him to go to sacrifice. The parents bring back his body, and mourn over it. Adam repents of the first sin, which has brought this sorrow upon them.

Tableau.—The Betrayal. Judas counts out the money before the High Priest.

Scene III.—Melchizedek's Offering.

Tableau.—The Last Supper.

Scene IV.—Abraham consents to sacrifice his son.

Tableau.—The Agony in Gethsemane.

Scene V.—Abraham and Isaac return and relate to Sara what has taken place. The Angel gives the blessing. (The sacrifice is omitted.)

Tableau.—The Crucifixion, similar to the scene in the Passion Play. (Maier is the Christus.)

Scene VI.—Joseph, as Governor of Egypt, comes to greet Jacob, and shows him his two children, whom Jacob blesses. This scene is headed 'Through Darkness into Light.'

Tableau.—Jesus is on a height, ready to ascend, in the act of blessing the disciples.

The play lasts from 9 A.M. to 12.

PROLOGUE.

When to the first of human race
Was breathed the blessed word of grace,
The promise, that the woman's Seed
Should bruise the serpent's head indeed,
It pierced the night of death and sin,
And let a ray of hope come in.
All pious spirits yearned to see
The advent of the Help to be,
The strong Deliverer—whose birth
Should take the curse of sin from earth,
And through the off'ring of His blood
Should reconcile mankind to God.
To that great Sacrifice of His
Point all the old observances;
'Twas He whom, filled with sacred awe,
In trance divine the Prophets saw—
For whom, oppressed by hostile yoke,
The sighs and prayers of Israel woke—
'Oh let Him drop like dew and showers
'Upon this weary world of ours!'

BASS (REC.).

And when the appointed times were ended,
The Son of God in mercy came,
In lowly form from heaven descended,
To take away our sin and shame.

ARIA.

Behold, upon what Altar bleeding
The Saviour chose for us to die,
Where still for us His death is pleading—
The Cross that stood on Calvary!

TENOR (REC.).

Oh, blessed sign of man's salvation,
Where flowed the Mediator's blood!

ARIA.

O treasure, past all valuation—
 We hail, we bless thee, holy Rood!
 Sweet comforter in time of sorrow,
 In death our only staff and stay,
 Shine with the light of Heaven's glad morrow
 Upon us when we pass away!

DUET.

There, where soft gales of mercy floating
 Invite us at His feet to bow,
 Our hearts and lives to Christ devoting,
 O brothers, let us seek Him now!

CHORUS.

School of the Cross! In thy pure teaching
 Learn we the way of life to tread—
 In thought and deed still onward reaching
 To follow—where our Lord has led!

PART I.

HATRED OF BRETHREN.

(*Bruderhass.*)

A.—THE ACTION.

Cain becomes infuriated with his brother Abel, because his sacrifice was pleasing to God while his own was rejected.

EPILOGUE.

What meaneth Cain? Will he be reconciled?
 Hath his soul listened to the Voice above?
 Have then his mother's loving tears beguiled
 His stubborn heart to penitence and love?
 Ah no! those passions own no mild compelling—
 From bitter envy springs a fiercer mood;
 The wicked thought to wicked purpose swelling,
 A brother thirsteth for his brother's blood!

B.—THE REPRESENTATION.

The Priests and Pharisees show their enmity to Christ during His solemn entry into Jerusalem.

So, uncontrolled, in angry ferment seething,
 The rage of man o'erflows the Saviour's path;
 The children's voices, sweet Hosannas breathing,
 Excite their envy to more frenzied wrath.

The louder peals the jubilee of gladness
 That bids the King of Zion enter in,
 The deeper penetrates the poison madness,
 Whereby the tempter goads them to their sin!

BASS (REC.).

They gather round Him in His Father's palace,
 Where echoes still His people's song of joy;
 With hearts all bitterness, and eyes all malice,
 They watch Him—planning how they may destroy!

ARIA.

Alas ! that men in their insensate blindness,
Should thus combine their Maker's wrath to brave—
Reject the Teacher, sent in loving-kindness,
And pierce the Hand in mercy stretched to save !

CHORUS.

Oh ! watch your hearts with vigilant endeavour !
Crush the first bud of envy, wrath, and guile !
Love ye the brotherhood ! That flower for ever
Shall bloom in Heaven beneath your Father's smile !

PART II.

BLOODGUILTINESS.

(*Die Blutschuld.*)

Cain, through his brother's murder, incurs bloodguiltiness.

EPILOGUE.

Alas ! the deed is done, accurst of Heaven—
A guiltless brother by a brother slain !
Now, by his agony of conscience driven
From land to land, he seeketh rest in vain !
Unhappy man ! thy sins had power to blind thee,
To Satan's voice thou gavest willing ear ;
Now rolls the thunder of God's wrath behind thee,
Which thou canst neither bear—nor cease to hear !

REPRESENTATION.

Judas is led by covetousness to sell his Lord and Master to his enemies, and thus makes himself a sharer in their guilt.

And as through envy was the first beginning
Of Satan's triumph o'er the soul of Cain,
So weaves he for the false disciple's winning,
The magic meshes of the love of gain.
See where the traitor, in his sordid dealing,
Snatches the price of blood—his Master's price—
And bursting every bond of holier feeling,
Delivers up his Lord for sacrifice !

TENOR.

Didst thou not hear the Master's word of terror,
' *Better for him that he had ne'er been born !* '
The love of mammon hardens him in error—
His soul is deaf—though Christ Himself shall warn !

ARIA.

The price of blood will cry aloud to Heaven,
And bar for evermore thine entrance there ;
Remorse will come too late, and unforgiven
The sense of guilt will drive thee to despair.

CHORUS.

Yield not your hearts to avaricious craving,
Spend not on earthly wealth your time and toil ;
But seek the treasure that is worth the having,
Which neither rust nor moth can ever spoil !

PART III.
THE SACRIFICIAL FEAST.

(*Das Opfermahl.*)

The High Priest Melchizedek, King of Salem, offers to the Most High a pure sacrifice of bread and wine.

EPILOGUE.

Whatever, in this life of ours,
Pervades the spirit's holiest hours,
By word and action will be known.
The saints in every age unite
By prayer and sacrificial rite
To come before Jehovah's throne.
With Abram, after Lot's release,
Melchizedek, the King of Peace,
Offered a gift of bread and wine.
In Shaveh's dale we saw him there
A sacrificial feast prepare,
And praise the Majesty Divine.

Jesus institutes, in His Last Supper, the perpetual sacrifice of the New Testament.

Here, in the upper chamber met,
The Saviour, with His loved ones yet,
Takes His last Paschal meal; and then,
Before He goes His doom to meet,
And the great sacrifice complete
By which He ransoms sinful men—
Just ere He reach the latest goal,
With death's dark shadow on His soul,
He institutes His Eucharist;
To be of that divine oblation
An ever-blest Commemoration
For all who bear the name of Christ.

ALTO (REC.).

In that High Priesthood, which He bore
As did Melchizedek of yore,
We saw Him give the heavenly food;
And still for us the board is spread,
And in the forms of Wine and Bread
He gives His very Flesh and Blood.

ARIA.

The love that bore and suffered thus,
And hung upon the Cross for us,
Wills not that any should be lost;
And we may in this Feast receive
All that His love delights to give—
And bought at such a fearful cost!

CHORUS.

Oh! ever, as we keep the Feast,
Rejoice we in our great High Priest!
And union, love, and faith maintain;
So that blest Death, our only plea,
Shall solemnly remembered be
Till He in glory comes again!

And now He shines as God Most High
 In glory and in Majesty ;
 But ere He to His Throne ascends,
 Cheers with His love His weeping friends.
 Subdued is death and all his powers—
 The Saviour's victory is ours ;
 He who endured the fearful strife,
 And by His dying gave us life,
 He rises now, as we shall rise,
 To reign for ever in the skies.

BASS (REC.).

The Lamb, from earth's foundation slain,
 He lives—and we shall live again.
 The seed of Abram, David's Son,
 Ascends to His eternal throne !

ARIA.

And to the place where He is gone,
 In tenderness He draws us on ;
 Invites us all with yearning love,
 To dwell with Him in Heaven above !

CHORUS.

Through steadfast faith in tribulation,
 Follow the Lord of your salvation,
 And in His Father's mansions blest,
 Partake His everlasting rest !
 Hallelujah !

A. H. DRURY.

MANZONI'S EARLY DAYS.

(Abridged from the Italian of Professor Stoppani.)

BY M. S. LEE.

I WAS once told of some literary man, whose name I have just now forgotten, that he used, as motto to a certain manuscript volume which he kept, the words 'Ne pereant,' which volume, as my readers will easily divine, was simply a common-place book, destined to receive, indiscriminately, just as he chanced to come across them, occasional pieces of poetry and prose, biographical notices, and miscellaneous passages, in every style and upon every subject. For why should these ephemeral productions of the press, pregnant, as they often are, with intelligence and feeling, be wholly scattered to the winds ? Might not the day come when, turning them over at haphazard, one might see some valuable record start to light ? some important date ? something, in short, in the category of the useful, the beautiful, or the good ? This man, with his common-place book and his motto, returned to my mind, when, for a moment, having duly pondered all the reasons in favour of printing these meagre notes on the subject of Alessandro Manzoni's early

years, I despaired of finding even a single one strong enough to justify me in so doing. Yet still I continued to repeat 'Ne pereant.' Ought these records of the early days of so great a man, which I have collected with so much enthusiasm, to be allowed to perish?

It will easily be conceived that few are left to tell about the infancy of a man who dies at the age of eighty-eight. Manzoni's contemporaries have, for the most part, passed away. Nevertheless, whatever crumbs of information could be gathered from amongst the dead or the living, from the walls of a house, from the benches of a school, I have zealously stored up, in order to be enabled to tell something of the child and the boy to those who have heard and read so much of the man, the author, the genius.

My first appeal to these authorities was made when, a few days after the death of Manzoni, I went to visit his cradle. If you want to see this cradle, go to Lecco; cross the bridge, and ascend the hills that stretch out from Monte Baro, between the lakes of Sola and Pescarènico, and join the heights of fair Brianza. Having reached Galbiate, ask for Mozzana, and you will be directed to a little group of houses, amidst which, and towering far above them, stands the country-house of Signor Guiseppe Resinelli, now Syndic of Lecco. Here, upon reference to the *custode*, you will be permitted to examine, to your heart's content, the great wicker basket, poised on two clumsy rockers, which will be pointed out to you as the cradle of Manzoni.

Alessandro Manzoni was descended, as is well known, from a patrician family of Valsàssina, which in latter times migrated to Lecco, and eventually to Milan, where the poet was born. To such a height of power and arrogance had these Caligulas of the valley, his ancestors, at one time attained, that they actually exacted from the poor mountaineers, their vassals, the preposterous homage, not only to themselves, but to their very dogs, which the Roman tyrant chose to exact for his horse Incitatus in a yet older age of oppression. If one of these poor, half-starved retainers chanced to pass the Casa Manzoni, where hound or mastiff was lying before the door, he was required to uncover and salute the animal respectfully with the words, 'Reverisse, Scior câ,' (Reverito, Signor Cane.) Even now, when the Pioverna, becoming swollen and turbulent, rushes through Valsàssina, sweeping down bridges, and encroaching on the sterile fields that have been redeemed from its vast gravelly bed, one may still hear, at times, from Valsàssinese lips, a quaint provincial rendering of the old proverb,* which denounces the river and the ruling families in its neighbourhood as equally devoid of reason and moderation. Who would have dreamed in those days that from that race of petty tyrants was destined to spring the creator of the immortal Capuchin, who, with menacing hand and flaming eyes, denounced from beneath his cowl the Don Rodrigos of all time? who,

* "I Cuzzi, la Pioverna, ed i Manzoni,
Non n' intendono mica di ragioni."

stirred by a like indignation, when apostrophizing one of the sweetest and fairest of his creation, could break out into yet more terrible denunciations, and call her fortunate, because she, the child of oppressors, was herself suffering oppression in expiation of their crimes.

“Te dalla rea progenie,
 Degli oppressor discessa,
 Cui fu prodezza il numero,
 Cui fu ragion l'offessa,
 E dritto il sangue, e gloria
 Il non aver pietà.

Manzoni had inherited from his father sufficiently large possessions in the territory of Lecco—amongst them a beautiful palazzo, called Il Calcotto, where the greater part of his childhood and youth was passed. It was in his thirty-fourth year when the irreparable ruin of this property, by the double-dealing of a knavish lawyer, compelled the author of *I Promessi Sposi* to witness the dear old haunts, with which so many pleasant, childish memories were bound up, passing into the hands of strangers. The new owner of the Palazzo Manzoni, and of the various effects which had been sold with it, found in one corner the identical cradle that I have described; and, naturally enough, when he moved, with his young family, into summer quarters in the country, the cradle travelled with them, and thus found its way to Mozzana.

Not many hundred yards from Mozzana, upon the descent of the hill that looks down, on one side, upon the ruin, said to be that of the ‘Innominato,’ Maggianico, Pescarenico, the lake, the fair country side, and the Resegone di Lecco; and, on the other, upon the sunny slopes of Eupile, stands the little cottage where dwelt Manzoni's foster-parents, Carlo and Caterina Spreafico. Caterina (as we are told by Signor Pedruzzi, of Galbiate, her native place) was a bright little brunette, with much sweetness and intelligence of character, not unlike the Lucia so well-known to us all; gifted, too, with humour and vivacity that made her the life of the little group which was wont to gather round her on Sundays to listen to her stories. It was the hope of some small gains, in the way of fact or anecdote, that brought me to this village a few days after Manzoni's death; for I heard that living in this cottage was a certain old man who had known him as a child, and who could relate ‘Mirabilia.’ I was doomed, however, to disappointment. The old man was ill in bed; and though, notwithstanding his extreme difficulty of breathing, he was eager to talk of the great man whom he had played with in his infancy, and of whose funeral pageant at Milan he had just heard; it was but little more he could tell me than that ‘Lisandrino’ was a ‘pescuilino,’ a ‘demonietto,’ and other like facts, that I either knew before or could easily imagine for myself. Yet one characteristic little anecdote I did carry away, which, though it relates to Manzoni's old age, at the same time touches closely on his childhood. It speaks well for Caterina and her family, that Lisandrino, when his baby days

were over, should again be sent by his parents to stay for a while in his foster-mother's cottage. In those days the boy's chief companion was Giovanni Spreafico, a lad about nine years older than himself. More than seventy years after, in talking with a gentleman from the neighbourhood of Galbiate, Manzoni learned from him that Giovanni was among the very few of his old friends that were still living. 'How much I should like to see that young man again,' he exclaimed. 'Tell him how much pleasure it would give me if he would come to see me at Milan,' and, not content with this verbal message, he wrote a letter of invitation to Giovanni with his own hand, which his friend undertook to deliver. It would have been very interesting to see that letter; but when I asked the sick man if it had been preserved, he only answered with a look of surprise at the folly of the question—and folly, no doubt, it was to expect that a peasant should appreciate the value of such a relic. That same letter, however, contained something more substantial than the paper on which it was written—a bright gold Napoleon; and the surprise and delight of the old man may be imagined. 'I shall go! I shall certainly go!' was his first exclamation, all recollection of his eighty-eight winters having for the moment vanished. But here his brother Luigi (the sick man to whom I was speaking) had interfered, and resolutely set his face against the idea of such a journey. Although the younger of the two, he was the *regiu*, the head of the family; while his elder brother, notwithstanding his eighty-eight years, was *balzàr*, which word I will translate for the benefit of those of my readers who are not Lombards as 'young man' or 'bachelor'—and, according to the custom of our peasants, the *regiu* commands, and the others obey. '*Diàmene!*' quoth Luigi. 'What! go all that way at this time of the year (it was in the heart of the winter), and you so ill? Patience. In March we will go together, for, *per Bacco*, I should myself like to see Lisandrino again after all these years.' But man proposes, and God disposes. When March came round, the first flowers of the cemetery were beginning to bloom upon the grave of poor Giovanni.

We will, however, leave this episode of Manzoni's old age, and glance at him in the second stage of his boyhood, when his nursery days had come to an end, and his parents had decided that it was time to send him to school.

Some years before his death, Manzoni paid a visit to the College of Merate, at which he had been a pupil from his sixth to his eleventh year (1791—1796), and it was with the keenest pleasure and interest that he roamed about the building and its precincts, dived into every corner, and recalled even the very smallest incidents of his school-life. This visit happened to have been made on the anniversary of the day when he first entered the college, accompanied by his mother, who, in order to avoid the pain of parting, disappeared while the boy was talking to one of the masters. He well recollected, he said, when, on turning round to look for his mother, he found her no longer there; but his eye fell upon

an image of 'the Christ,' in the garb of a monk, bearing on the shoulders a huge cross, the distinguishing badge of the Somaschi, which may still be seen in white wood over their postern-gate. There was something about this figure which made a very deep and melancholy impression on little Lisandrino's mind. Speaking of the education he received there, he lamented that the pupils were so entirely trusted to the 'prefetti'—lay brothers, who, to distinguish them from the 'padri,' wore a somewhat shorter gown. 'They were,' he said, 'worthy enough people on the whole; but, considered in the light of educators, one could have wished they had been somewhat less scantily educated themselves.' At the same time he spoke well of the teaching given at the college; though, once out of the schoolroom, the boys had no more communication with the masters. *A propos* of this, the superior ventured to ask whether certain pungent lines in the little poem on the death of Imbonati referred to the College of Merate. 'No,' replied Manzoni, 'they related to the reminiscences of later years.' Nevertheless, whatever Manzoni might have found to praise in the system pursued at Merate, it is evident that his life there was not altogether *couleur de rose*; for those were days when rod, and strap, and cane, were conspicuous objects in every schoolroom, and when schoolmasters had little scruple in using either fist or foot for the purpose of seconding their authority. Instances of such rough discipline seem to have formed a large part of Manzoni's reminiscences. He pointed out, laughing, the spot where, having by some boyish trick aroused the wrath of one of the lay-brothers, he brought down the fist of the exasperated 'frate' upon his imprudent little head. Another occasion, still green in his memory, was one upon which he had been condemned to remain for a certain time on his knees, which penance was much aggravated by the trying spectacle of a schoolfellow, who, taking advantage of these moments of helplessness, was making free with some of his possessions. Unable to vent his wrath as he could wish, the indignant Lisandrino was obliged to do what he could by means of defiant glances and threatening fists directed towards this faithless comrade; but, alas! even this unsatisfactory protest was cut short by the superior, of whose presence the hapless little penitent was reminded by a box on the ear which sent him on his face upon the floor. But of all the unpleasant recollections which remained on Manzoni's mind concerning the College of Merate, none provoked from him such an expression of bitterness as that which escaped his lips when he spoke of the conduct (brutal, indeed, even in those times) of a 'prefetto,' who, during those first days at the college, when he was crying at the separation from his mother, asked him, with a blow, when he meant to have done whining for her.

Only six years old at the time of his entrance, the youngest of all the pupils, carefully brought up, and exceedingly refined and sensitive by nature, Lisandrino was one of those boys who are apt to become the victims, one may almost say the pariahs, of school society, in which

the rougher and more uncultured, especially if they have at the same time more physical strength, develop on their side into despots and tyrants.

Poor Lisandrino was, for the most part, between the hammer and the anvil, oppressed by one party, defended by another, sympathizing with neither, and almost as much afraid of the protectors as the oppressors. Perhaps the memory of these sufferings of his boyhood may have been the cause of Manzoni's intense dislike to cabals and secret societies, confederacies, in fact, of any description arrogating to themselves an arbitrary power. This antipathy certainly exercised a most decided influence on his whole life. Many accuse him of not having been a man of action, of not having thrown himself into the great national movement which, begun while he was still a youth, was so happily accomplished only a few years before he was carried, rich in years and honours, to the grave. Inasmuch as Manzoni always cherished a strong abhorrence of anything like conspiracy, there is truth in what they say. At the same time, he was a friend of some of the most active conspirators, a sharer of their ideas and aspirations; and, much as he differed from them on the question of means, his hopes were fixed upon the same end which they had in view. The genuine dictates of his heart appear in the 'cori' of his tragedies, in the *Proclama di Rimini*, and in the *Marzo*, 1821. Yet he could never bring himself to be a conspirator. Nevertheless, Manzoni was at one time not far from encountering the fate which overtook Silvio Pellico, Maroncelli, Audryane, and Confalonieri. He was the friend of the latter, who kept him *au courant* with much that was going on. One day Confalonieri, confined to his bed by illness, sent for the young Alessandro. Presuming too much on the issue of the plot organized by the celebrated Carbonari, he wanted to establish a provisional government, which should be prepared to act at the first announcement of success. He had set his heart on securing as a member of this government Monsignor Lozzi, vicar of the diocese of Milan, a man of high character and intellect; but, not being personally acquainted with him, and knowing that he was intimate with the Manzoni family, Confalonieri confided his ideas to Alessandro, who undertook to convey his sentiments to the vicar. But the monsignor, after having used all his eloquence to demonstrate the folly and rashness of premature measures, summed up by saying, in the 'Bergamarco' dialect, which throughout life always clung to him, 'Che i vegne prima; pò m'sarà teuce pronce'—'Let them come first, they will find us ready.' How the affair ended is well known. Confalonieri, confined in an Austrian prison, behaved with a daring imprudence which amounted to ostentation; and, in the line of defence he took, cannot be acquitted of a certain reckless disregard of the fact that on a single word of his might depend the lives and liberties of many others. Amongst other things, he deposed that he had intended to establish a provisional government, in which Monsignore Lozzi had been pressed to take part. This appeared so

unlikely to the Austrian 'commissari' that they looked on it as an invention. For formality's sake, however, a commissary of police waited on the monsignore, and, with many apologies, and much circumlocution, mentioned the distinguished prisoner's avowal, and requested an explanation. Monsignore Strozzi was, as may be imagined, somewhat taken aback. But he was not a man to lose his presence of mind. 'I!' he exclaimed, with a gesture of astonishment, 'I give you my word that I have never spoken to the Conte Confaloneri in my life.' 'Exactly; most assuredly; our very words,' replied the commissary; 'it was of course, on the face of it, impossible. Monsignore must excuse us, but there are certain official duties that we must perform. Pardon—pardon;' and thus excusing himself, the commissary took his departure. As for the monsignore, his first proceeding was to go and warn his young friend Manzoni, and both passed an anxious time for many days to come, conscious that life and liberty were, to a certain extent, at the mercy of one who had already managed to bring into trouble his involuntary accomplices; and that the law might be used to condemn as guilty of high treason those who, however averse to becoming conspirators, had even stronger objections to acting as spies.

But, to return to our little Sandrino, who, at eleven years old, was passed on from the College of Merate to that of Lugano, also superintended by the Padre Somaschi, where he stayed till the September of 1798.

An eleven-year-old stomach, destined to perform its functions efficiently for seventy-seven years more, was naturally inclined to rebel against the somewhat Pythagorean method of treatment practised in this college, where sparseness of body was deemed indispensable to activity of mind; and Lisandrino remembered the pangs of hunger suffered then, to the latest hour of his life. Some pleasant reminiscences, however, he cherished of Lugano. He loved to talk of Padre Soave, whose talents and learning did so much for public education in Italy. His grammar and arithmetic were still in use in my own time, and his *novelle* devoured with enthusiasm.

Padre Soave did not belong to the College of Lugano, but had taken refuge there during the troubles that distracted Lombardy in 1796. His constant kindness and mild discipline, so unusual in those days, made a deep impression upon Manzoni, who, seventy years after, still continued to dwell with gratitude upon Padre Soave's goodness of heart, truth, and purity of character.

'How Manzoni and I have laughed together,' says the celebrated historian, Cesare Cantu, 'over some of our freaks in the College of Lugano, where he was studying at the time when the Jacobin storm was approaching Lombardy. His favourite anecdotes, I think, were always those referring to good old Padre Francesco Soave. I recollect well how desperately it used to ruffle the worthy Padre's feelings, when Alessandro, infected with the prevalent revolutionary ideas, insisted upon writing

king,—pope,—emperor, without capital letters; and how, when we fairly drove him beyond his patience, he would suddenly produce from the sleeve of his cassock a slender rod—much such a one as jugglers use for their conjuring tricks—and shake it violently over the head or shoulders of the delinquent (taking care however, not to touch him); after which he would put it back, and subside into his usual calmness."

During Manzoni's college life, his holidays were generally spent at Calcotto; and one of the companions of these holidays has only very lately passed away from us. This was the well-known architect, Guiseppe Bovara, the friend of most of the distinguished men of his time, and amongst others, of Alessandro Manzoni, with whom the intimacy, begun in those early days, was only ended by death.

He talked to me a good deal about Manzoni's boyhood, and always described him as calm and even-tempered, with a sort of sedateness and self-possession in all his ways. 'Nothing extraordinary about him,' he added, 'Nothing that could have led me to prophesy what he was to become one day.'

Another, and a humbler friend of Manzoni's youth was Giovanni Comino, who, in the character of faithful servant, has some title to a place in our records of the past. In those days of leisure, before the French Revolution, when sleep was tranquil, and digestion possible, Don Pietro, Alessandro's father, was in the habit of making a pilgrimage from time to time to dine with the Capuchins of Castello; who, in return for their hospitality, were occasionally invited to Calcotto. Giovanni Comino was the cook, or, as he was called in the neighbourhood, *L'uomo dei frati*. When the convent was suppressed by Guiseppe II. Don Pietro took Comino into his household, where he performed all manner of functions; acting now as cook, now as steward—the factotum, in short, of the family.

Don Pietro, at his death, left Comino a small pension, which was augmented by the young heir, being, in his opinion, insufficient. Kind and considerate to all alike, Alessandro had a more than common regard for this old servant.

In the first place, Comino had often come to the rescue of the hungry, growing, boy; who, always underfed at school, found that the air and exercise which were to be had in abundance at home made his appetite even more ravenous than ever.

Don Pietro, loyal to the rigid educational system of the time, had ordained that nothing was to be eaten between the canonical hours. But the poet of the future was a victim to the pangs of present hunger, which the good-natured Comino was wont to relieve by forestalling the legitimate meals with surreptitious supplies of bread and cheese. Another great merit of Comino's, in his young master's eyes, was his having held out alone against both French and Russians, during a sort of assault on Calcotto after the famous days of Gera d'Adda and Verderio in 1799. The Russians have certainly left their mark upon Lecco, but at the same

time, not a few of them have left their bones there as well. I remember, as a child, being told how the floor of the cellar at Calcotto was literally covered with the dead bodies of Russians who were surprised there during a comfortable carousal.

One moment there was when poor Comino really thought that his last hour had come. He was beaten down, and a Cossack was preparing to despatch him, when a French soldier leaping suddenly from one of the windows, closed with the Russian; and Comino, by dint of making good use of his legs, much to his own amazement, got off in safety.

During the last few years that Alessandro Manzoni continued to hold Calcotto, Comino acted as steward. But the poor old man could not prevent the iniquitously careless, or rather dishonest management of his master's affairs by a certain Signor A—— G——, a solicitor, who, by a somewhat peculiar provision of Don Pietro's will, had been appointed administrator of all the Manzoni property. This man played fast and loose with the estate, till at length came the day when Don Alessandro could no longer hide from himself that only one course remained to be taken, and that he must put his hand to a deed, authorizing the sale of Calcotto, and all his other possessions in the territory of Lecco. One may easily conceive how much such a sacrifice must have cost Manzoni, and how painful must have been the last hours at Calcotto, when he went to take leave of his old home, and to receive the sums yet due from his tenantry.

But these sums were not forthcoming. Reasons and excuses were to be had in abundance, but no money; for, as Manzoni soon found, these people had been running on in his debt to an almost hopeless extent, in some cases to the amount of 3000 lire milanesi, no contemptible sum in those days. Manzoni wound up the affair in a characteristic way. He seized his pen, paused for a moment, then,—‘Come! come! We will draw a line through all these figures, and say no more about them. I hereby proclaim a general quittance.’

Comino, after staying for a while at Calcotto with the new owner of the estate, died at length at Milan, in the house of the master whom he had served with a loyalty which merited the affection of a great man, and was rewarded with that of Manzoni.

But we are once more trespassing beyond the bonds of Lisandrino's boyhood. Between his thirteenth and fourteenth year he was removed from the care of the Somaschi to that of the Barnabiti, to whom belonged the collage of Castellazzo, and also that of Langone in Milan, in order to complete his course of study in preparation for the university. He recollected at the time when he was quartered at Castellazzo dei Barzi witnessing the unfortunate retreat of the French after their defeat by the Austrians. In the last years of his life this dismal picture was as vivid as ever in his memory—the disorganized bodies of weary men who came straggling by, now in couples, now one by one, now in small parties, some on foot, some in carts, barefooted, or with bandaged feet, haggard

with famine, and stretching out their hands for alms. Possibly the impression left by this scene may have coloured his description of the passing of the Lanzknechts in 'I Promessi Sposi,' though in that case it is not of fugitives but of invaders that he speaks.

Concerning the College of Longone, Manzoni's chief reminiscences are decidedly satisfactory ones. Here, for the first time, he was allowed to satisfy his hunger, and here his love of books began suddenly to develop itself. Always with a book in his hand, and always laden with a supply of 'provaunt,' he ate and read, and read and ate without ceasing. Not that Manzoni had become a model scholar; on the contrary, most of the schoolbooks were but little to his taste, though in his old age he could repeat word for word, as if he were in class, the old lessons learned by heart at school, and would recite passage after passage of Frugoni, Betinelli, and other poets of that stamp, who were held up to the young people of those days as standard writers.

Manzoni, however, at fourteen, had acquired a taste for a very different sort of poetry, and consequently had not much relish for (I will not call them poetasters but) poets who can hardly be denominated great. Parini was his special delight. He used to tell, as an incident which had made a deeper impression on him than almost any other in his life, how, one day, while he was poring over the celebrated ode, 'Quando Orion dal cielo,' &c., with feelings wrought up to a high pitch of enthusiasm, it was suddenly announced to him that Parini was dead. To see this man, to know him, to speak to him, had been his most cherished dream; and Parini was dead.

Some recompense, however, he had for this misfortune. One day, not long after, Vincenzo Monti came to visit the college, and in passing near Alessandro (who had, perhaps, been pointed out to him as a relation of the celebrated Beccaria) stopped for a moment, and addressed one or two words to the boy.

What these words were I cannot say, but to Manzoni, who had just read 'La Basvilliana,' it seemed as if he had been suddenly lifted into the seventh heaven. He doubtless felt, though as yet but vaguely, what he afterwards expressed in the passionate words:—

" Profondo,
Mi sollecita l'amor che Italia un giorno
Me di suoi vati al drappel sacro aggiunga."

What would his feelings have been could anyone have said to him at that moment:—'This man whom you admire so enthusiastically will soon be left far behind by you. You are destined to overthrow that school of which this man is the strongest bulwark. You shall found a new school, and the century shall be yours'?

Manzoni, however, made ample amends to Monti for the eclipse which

he eventually suffered by the well-known epigram which he wrote on his death :—

“Salve, O divino, a cui largì Natura,
Il cor di Dante e del suo duca il canto :
Questo fia 'l grido dell' età ventura,
Ma l'età che fu tua te 'l dice in pianto.”

And we many mention here that Monti, on his side, upon reading one of Manzoni's early poems, exclaimed : ‘He begins where I thought to have finished.’

Notwithstanding the divergence of opinion and difference of schools between the old poet and the young one, they were always on the best of terms, and if friendship can exist between two men widely apart in age it certainly existed between Vincenzo Monti and Alessandro Manzoni.

Monti took a strong liking for the young man, to whom he acted, not only as master and critic, but also as mentor, and even father ; and Alessandro on his part, felt for his illustrious friend an affection and esteem that amounted to veneration. Those who visited Monti during his last days, which were tormented by cruel disease, would generally find the author of ‘I Promessi Sposi’ seated beside his bed.

But it was something besides the poet that Manzoni honoured in Monti, and he had good reason to do so. At the time when Alessandro was just fresh from college, in the heyday of youth, and with a more than commonly impressionable nature, the infamous traffic of the gaming-table (now obliged to seek the shelter of the most disreputable haunts in order to escape from the police) was carried on publicly in defiance of any law, either human or divine ; and the very governments which are now making every effort to abolish it, in those days took under their protection the gaming-houses, that were alike the ruin of private fortunes and public morality. The inexperienced Alessandro allowed himself to be tempted into one of these Ridotti, and, as he afterwards confessed, soon became conscious that the passion for play was speedily gaining a terrible power over him ; when, as he sat one evening amongst the eager group around the table, he felt a light touch on the shoulder, and, turning hastily, was spell-bound at meeting the eyes of Vincenzo Monti.

‘If this is the road you mean to travel,’ said the latter quietly, ‘what great things shall we hear of your future poetry !’

Who can estimate the effect of such a gentle reproof upon a nature like Manzoni's ? His mind was made up. He had played for the last time.

When he reached home, with this kind, yet solemn warning still ringing in his ears, his first impulse was to tell the whole story to his mother. Donna Giulia's joy and relief may easily be conceived. But she was a woman of judgment, and knew too well how little such sudden resolutions, made on the spur of the moment, are to be depended on, especially when the indulgence of a passion has begun to grow into a habit.

‘And now, she asked, ‘what do you mean to do in order to keep this vow of yours? I tell you what I advise. I will make you an allowance, and you shall pay a visit to Paris. There you will be away from temptation, away from these acquaintances.’

‘No, no,’ cried Alessandro resolutely, ‘then I should have no merit in the affair; then I could not say that I had conquered myself. I will stay where I am. I will go to the Ridotto every evening, and you shall see that I am strong enough to keep my word.’

And, accordingly, every evening for a whole month he was to be seen at the Ridotto; but, as we have said, after that evening which conferred honour alike on the old poet and the young one, Manzoni ceased to make one at the gaming-table.

Such scraps of information as we have relating to this epoch of Manzoni's life, and, indeed to the whole of his early manhood, during which he lived much in society, and consequently with men of many different stamps, all agree in bearing witness to the fact that he was a most acute observer, and, at the same time, a profound thinker on what he had observed. I am convinced that there is not one character in his romance of *I Promessi Sposi* that the author could not have referred to some type, more or less defined, in his own experience. Such a character as that of Padre Cristoforo in its ideal perfection is certainly not likely to have been met with in real life. But, as we have said, Manzoni had been used from childhood to see Cappucini in his father's house, to meet them on many occasions, probably to visit them in the convents of Pescarenico and Castello, and amongst these, doubtless, some few imperfect specimens of a Padre Cristoforo or a Padre Felice, and many an absolute facsimile of a Frate Galdino must have been found ready to his hand. Padre Cristoforo is in fact, to a certain extent, a historical personage. C. Cantu, in his ‘*Ragionamenti sulla Storia Lombarda del Secolo xvii. per commento ai Promessi Sposi*,’ relates how a Padre Cristoforo of Cremona figured amongst the Capuchins doing duty in the lazaretto during the plague of 1630, and quotes a passage from the Chronicle of D Pio La Croce:—‘Nelli stessi giorni il Padre Cristoforo da Cremona, sacerdote, molto avanti già eletto a quel servizio, tolti gli ostacoli che fin all'ora gliel' avevano impedito, alla fine entro nel desiderato arringo, e ben se può dire desiderato, perché più volte fu udito a dire: —Io ardo di desiderio di andare a morire per Gesù Cristo, ed un' ora mi pare mille anni. Desiderio ch'ebbe poi felicissimo l'effetto corrispondente a 10 pure di giugno, morendo di peste per il servizio di quei pòveri nella persona de' quali serviva, il suo diletto Gesù.’

Besides his many ecclesiastical friends and acquaintances, Manzoni could number two members of his own family among the clergy,—a cousin, Canon of San Nazzaro, and an uncle, Monsignor del Duomo. Few had better opportunities of acquiring an intimate knowledge of the priesthood, in the midst of whom he may almost be said to have grown

up ; and we see in his creations, which show so many and such delicately-drawn shades of character, how carefully he must have studied this class, and learned to distinguish priest from priest, and friar from friar ; those who were the strength and honour of the Christianity which they professed, from those who were its weakness and reproach. Don Abbondio, for instance. Was he an imaginary character ? or did he exist in fact ? I could divulge his name, but *parce sepultis*. I will only say that he was a curate with whom Manzoni was intimate in his youth. One of the most distinguished students of theology in the diocese of Lombardy had been chosen to finish his studies in the Seminario Maggiore of Pavia. When, in due time, they presented themselves as candidates for Holy Orders, they were obliged (as in the present time) to pass a certain examination, the principal object of which, in those days, was to ascertain whether the candidates had been infected by any doctrines deemed heretical ; and our Don Abbondio, whose intellect seems to have been stronger than his principles, was among the successful candidates. Some time after this, on talking over the subject of the examination, Don Abbondio repeated an answer which he had made to the examiners, adding ‘I had wit enough to know what they expected me to say.’ Manzoni, though this gave somewhat of a shock to his friendship, was naive enough to ask whether he had really answered in accordance with his convictions.

‘Oh, as to that,’ replied Don Abbondio, ‘I was taught quite the contrary at Pavia ; but if I had said what I thought, I should never have been allowed to say mass.’

Manzoni was inclined to remonstrate against such reasoning, but the curate cut him short with this politic maxim, ‘When one’s superiors ask questions, one must find out what their opinion is, and answer accordingly.’ Can this be any other than our old friend Don Abbondio of *I Promessi Sposi* ? One of the most painful episodes in Manzoni’s writings is the story of Gertrude. A young girl, educated from infancy to become the unwilling victim of a fatal necessity ; to pretend a vocation for the life most contrary to her nature ; and to feel her mind preying on itself in loneliness and starvation ; the brightest worldly prospects, from which she was cut off, ever before her eyes ; the void to be filled up ultimately either with hatred or illicit love ; to see in her father only an executioner ; in religion an implement that was crushing her spirit by slow torture ; in life nothing but a mockery and a lie ; forced by her cruel destiny to walk upon a thorny road, only to sink, after all, into guilt and despair, and to end in a repentance that could bring no pardon in this world. It is, indeed, a terrible episode—an historical one, nevertheless—the history, in fact, of an epoch. The progress of ideas ; the rebellion of the public conscience, awakened at length from a sleep already too long ; the higher mental culture of the aristocracy ; the decrease of class prejudices ; the new careers open to women ; the promulgation of certain laws—(that, for instance, abolishing the rights of primogeniture)—these,

and sundry other causes have led to this, that forced monasticism has become in these days, like the scarcely more abominable practice of torture, an ugly reminiscence of the past. At the same time, recollecting that one of the most popular books in Italy, the romance of *I Promessi Sposi* was published in 1825, and judging from the strong effect which it still produces, of that which it must have produced at the time, by such a terribly living picture, I cannot but think that the tragedy of Gertrude, as told by Manzoni, must have had the same influence upon the system of compulsory monasticism as had the celebrated book of his uncle, Cesare Beccaria, upon that of torture. But though it is only too true that Gertrude, under another name, is really to be found in history, I have reason to believe that this episode, in which Manzoni paints so vividly the unhappy consequences of an enforced vow, may have had its foundation in some of the reminiscences of his young days. Alessandro, besides two near relations in the priesthood, had an aunt who was a nun. Not that I would suggest that she was a Gertrude! God forbid! She was, however, one of those lively, sparkling, quick-witted women, who seem born to shine in society. She had not been dragged by force into a convent. She had only been led there, and had allowed herself to be so led. Then came the suppression of the convents, by order of Guiseppe II.; and the released nun, thanking God for her escape, darted from her prison like a bird whose cage door is suddenly opened by a compassionate jailor. After her restoration to her family, the ex-nun, who had a great affection for Lisandrino, took into her own hands the management of one special branch of his education, the object of which was to make him into a brilliant man of the world. It does not, however, seem that the soil of his mind was as favourable to this kind of culture as his anxious instructress could have wished. Still, she was not a woman to be easily daunted, and Lisandrino was obliged to go through a course of lessons in music and drawing, for neither of which he had the smallest talent. Not that he was one of those people who are unable to take any pleasure in music. Far from it. He loved to listen to music, and was a great admirer of Verdi, with whom he was very intimate; but Fate had decreed that he was never to be more than a listener; and as to dancing, he always declared that he never could put one foot before the other with the smallest approach to grace.

Perhaps, in my description of this aunt of Manzoni's, I have implied that she was wholly without a devout side to her character. This, however, was by no means the case. She never failed to take Alessandro to the 'Benedizione' in the church called Alla Pace, which was still used at that time. Still, it must be confessed that she did not fail to make use of the opportunity of talking on other subjects by the way.

'Do you see that window?' said Manzoni, to a friend who was passing with him through the Via di Santa Prassede. 'It was just there that I stood one day with my aunt, who was giving me a lecture on the habits and customs of the *beau monde*, when lo! who should come up behind

us but Monsignor, my uncle ! and the inimitable ease and adroitness with which my aunt changed the conversation would have roused the envy of an experienced comic actor.'

Lisandrino was much struck with this little trait of character in *la Zia*, and probably drew his own conclusions from it. At that time a favourable topic of discussion in the family was the suppression of monasteries, and all the *pros* and *cons* were brought forward that have been in constant use from that day to this. But *la Zia* never would let herself be drawn into the meshes of an argument. She preferred to jump to a conclusion with her usual ready shrewdness. 'Oh ! as for me, I am of the opinion of Giuseppe II. *Aria ! Aria !*' she would say, drawing great circles in the air with one hand, as if to express the intense longing for space and liberty which had weighed on her for so many years. Even without possessing Manzoni's imagination, one scarcely needs the example of a Gertrude to suggest what (under like circumstances) might too easily be the consequences of a forced vocation.

To quote one more instance of the powers of early impressions, shall I venture to point out a possible trace of the *Cinque Maggio* ? On June 16th, 1800, Napoleon gained his victory at Marengo. On the 17th he entered Milan. Rejoicings were going on in many parts of Italy, and Milan was in a state of delirium. Some there were, however, who chose (for reasons on which we will not now enter) to have nothing to do with these festivities, and the first consul had reason to know that the Contessa Cicognara di Bologna, then at Milan, was one of his most determined enemies. One evening, when the first consul was present at the theatre, Alessandro, then a lad of fifteen, was in the Contessa's box. Whether even Napoleon was weak enough to be not wholly indifferent to a woman's opinion of him, and whether he wished to defy the Contessa, and punish her antipathy, I cannot say, but he chose that evening to sit with his eyes obstinately fixed upon her box, as if he would have liked to wither her up with his glance.

Manzoni, in a corner by the side of the victim, could not turn his eyes away from those of the hero. 'What eyes !' he said once, when in his old age he was speaking of this incident to one of his friends, 'What eyes that man had !'

'Then it was those eyes,' said his friend lightly, 'that suggested that verse'—

"Chinati i rai fulminei."

'Exactly so,' replied Manzoni, 'exactly so.' But all this time we have said nothing to indicate that the boy showed any signs of the future poet, and for this simple reason, that all who knew him agree in the statement that Manzoni, as a child, gave no promise of becoming what he eventually became. Some go further, and assert that Lisandrino's usual place at school was on the 'banco dell' asino,' and, if we are to believe Manzoni himself, he never studied, he knew absolutely nothing ;

he was in fact neither more nor less than a dunce. This must not, however, be taken quite literally, especially when we recollect his love for the classics, and his enthusiasm for Parini and Monti. Perhaps Manzoni, in his manhood, had a right to be severe on Manzoni as a boy. Still, it is hard to believe that the man who could publish *I Promessi Sposi* at forty could have been an absolute dullard in his childhood. Probably among the causes that contributed to keep him back at school, the chief were his natural timidity and nervous temperament, more particularly the unfortunate habit of stammering, which, generally more exaggerated in children than in grown-up people, is invariably made worse either by fear or constraint.

Happily Monti could appreciate his real worth, and encourage him to look forward to the time when he also would be a poet. The anecdote of the Ridotto of La Scala shows that Manzoni, even at that time, must have written verses of some promise. If none of these have been left to us, it is to Manzoni himself that we owe the loss. An inexorable destroyer of all his productions that fell in the least degree below his own high ideal, he would have disdained to leave among his papers any trace whatever of the poetry, or other literary attempts of those juvenile days. One who would gladly have disowned the *Versi in Morte dell'Imbonati* and the *Urania*, would certainly not have spared the first crude experiments of his 'prentice hand. Nevertheless, one or two stray specimens of his early efforts did somehow escape from the flames that devoured the rest, and perhaps others of his despised offspring may yet be hidden in some forgotten corner, destined, sooner or later, to come to light, now that the noble wrath of their father is no longer to be feared. It is probably already known that there is in existence, besides a sonnet in praise of Francesco Lomonaco, a Neapolitan emigrant, written in 1801, a little poem in *terza rima*, divided into four cantos, and called, *Il Trionfo della Libertà*. This is the relic of his boyish poetry to which I alluded; and, taking into consideration the age at which it was written, I maintain that it is worthy of Manzoni.

After reading merely the few passages quoted by Professor Teodoro Pertusati, in his eloquent article, I had no hesitation in saying, 'These are the verses of Manzoni at seventeen, but they are none the less evidently the verses of Manzoni.' His mind had not then produced its finest fruit, nor its fairest flowers, but still his mind is there—a mind in which one sees already deeply rooted a love of justice, true liberty, and true patriotism, hatred of tyranny and fanaticism, and enthusiasm for all that is great, and good, and beautiful. 'It is a work,' says Pertusati, 'that surpasses much that has been written by authors of undoubted worth, in its high tone of thought, its elevation of style, and purity of diction.'

But I feel that I have already gone beyond the limits of the field to which my gleanings were to be confined. Many have already written, and probably many will write in future on the subject of Manzoni's later

years and literary labours. I will therefore leave him on the threshold of his manhood, and bid farewell to the young readers who may have been interested in these anecdotes of his childish days, with the hope that their lives, if not as long or as glorious, may be at least as pure and blameless as that of Alessandro Manzoni.

ODDS AND ENDS OF WEATHER WISDOM AND FRAGMENTS OF FOLK LORE.

JULY.

‘When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,
And hide in cooling trees.’

Keats.

THANKS to Julius Cæsar, and the fate which caused his birthday to fall in July, there is no difficulty in deciding on the etymology of the name of this month, which was originally called ‘Quintilis,’ on account of its being the fifth from March, the month in which the Roman year began; but as ‘Cæsar the Dictator was borne at Rome, when Caius Martius and Lucius Valerius Flaccus were consuls, vpon the fourthe day before the Ides of Quintilis, this moneth after his deathe was, by vertue of the law Antonia, called, for that cause, Julie.’

There were no lack of English names either, Verstegan himself furnishes two; hew monat, or hay monat, that is to say, hey moneth, because therein our ancestors usually mowed and made their hay harvest; and also mead monath from the meads being then in their bloom. The first of these names agrees with the font in the church at Burnham Depedale, in Norfolk, on which emblematical figures for each of the Saxon months are carved, and July is represented by a mower; but the Scotch must have made their hay some time previously, at least if we are to believe the old ballad—

‘And round about a’ the castles
You may baith plow and sow,
And on the fifteenth day of May
The meadowes they will mow.’

Unless proud Lady Margaret was as wrong in this as she had been in all her previous assertions.

July is said to have been the beginning of the Celtic year, but whether this was so or not I have no means of knowing; indeed the name *Lida Aftera*, or Second Lide, being the second month of the sun’s descent, would rather tend to show that this was not the case. Another name was Hen Monath, or Leaf Month, from the German Hain, a grove; and lastly, Sun Monath, the meaning of which is self-evident, for there is a proverb current at Brescia, but true elsewhere, that the July sun does for two (‘sul de Lui El fa per dii.’)

July has not many proverbs which belong to it as a whole, and those there are chiefly refer to the crops, as is only natural, though I am glad to say that the English labourers do not speak of 'plaguy July,' as they do in Sardinia, the reason there given being that in this month there is too much work for the farmers to do. We, on the contrary, in the South of England, at any rate, hold that if we

'Look well to the cow,
And the sow,
And the wheat-mow,
All will be well enow.'

'In July shear your rye' is one of the proverbs peculiar to this month, or, as another version puts it still more forcibly,

'In July
Reap your rye ;
In August
If you won't, another must.'

And the reapers in Bohemia are encouraged by the quails, who call to them when they are at work in the harvest-fields in July—'Come cut, come cut, here's five kreuzers, five kreuzers for you!' Our English harvest-bird is not so liberal, and only begs for 'A little bit of bread and no cheese' for himself, while the Irish corn-crake says nothing but 'Faith, faith.'

Tusser gives an axiom in his *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry*—

'No tempest good July
Lest the corn look bluely.'

But, as usual, opinions differ on this point, for the *Book of Knowledge* states that 'Thunder in July signifieth the same year shall be good corn and loss of beasts; that is to say, if their strength shall perish, which last fact appears so self-evident that one is inclined to think that one might possibly have succeeded in finding it out for oneself. The British Merlin, which professes to be adorned 'with many delightful and useful verities, fitting all capacities in the islands of Great Britain's Monarchy,' gives many directions for July, some of which are so quaint that they are really worth preserving. For instance, you are recommended to get 'Rue, wormwood and gall to strew your floors to destroy fleas. At the full of the moon, gather flowers rather in the shade than in the sun, which too much exhalet their virtue; but to avoid corruption, lest the sun heats a little visit them. . . . In times of pestilence, keep your chamber windows shut till the sun have force of shining. Perfume (query) your chamber every morning with tar upon a chafing dish of coals. Use Carduus Benedictus boiled, and drink it on a fasting stomach.' Let us be thankful that some, at any rate, of these precautions are no longer so necessary as they were in the good old times when, though cleanliness as a virtue, was always allowed to rank next to godliness, yet that attention was not paid to it in its minor details which is now thought requisite.

The 1st of July, the day on which the battle of the Boyne was fought, is the day of days with those of the Irish who revere, to use the words of the old toast, the 'glorious, pious, and immortal memory of William III.,' who, according to the same formula, delivered them from Papacy, prelacy, priestcraft, and wooden shoes, and whose return to England was commemorated by Wesley's father's old clerk in the following lines:—

' King William has come home, come home,
King William home has come,
Therefore with joy we all will sing
The tune they call Te Dum,'

which was duly sung in church.

While the details of the battle are fully set forth in the ballad—

' July the first of a morning clear, one thousand six hundred and thirty,
King William did his men prepare—of thousands he had thirty,
To fight King James and all his host encamped near the Boyne water.

* * * * *

' Both horse and foot he marched on, intending for to batter,
But the brave Duke Schomberg he was shot as he crossed over the water.
When that King William he observed the brave Duke Schomberg falling,
He reined his horse with a heavy heart on the Enniskilliners calling.*

' What will you do for me brave boys, see yonder men retreating,
Our enemies encouraged are, and the English drums are beating?
He says, " My boys feel no dismay at the losing of one commander,
For God shall be our King to-day, and I'll be general under."'

There are both English and French sayings for the 1st which agree in prophesying rain—

' If the first of July be rainy weather
'Twill rain more or less for four weeks together.'

And—

' Quand il pleut à le Saint Calais,
Il pleut quarante jours après.'

But really one becomes almost tired of recording this prediction, which has attached itself to every day, without exception, in July. Indeed, Mr. Swainson observes on this, *à propos* of the 15th, S. Swithin's Day, that the same belief (respecting the meteorologically prophetic character of some day about this period of the year) prevails in every part of Europe, though differences exist as to the length of time ruled over by the particular day in question. Thus in France, S. Médard (June 8th), and SS. Gervase and Protasius (June 19th) have this power assigned to them. In Belgium the rainy saint is S. Godeliève (July 6th), whilst in Germany, amongst others, a character of that description is ascribed to the day of the Seven Sleepers (July 27th). In some parts of Poland, S. Harold (July 19th) is considered a weather prophet. In Denmark, the 2nd of July—the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary—and the 10th,

* Another version says—

' He reined his horse with a heavy heart, and thus discoursed the meeting.'

A thoroughly Irish proceeding.

S. Margaret's Day, are to be feared ; and the first of these days has such a watery reputation on the Rhine that it is called ' Marie Eintropfentag,' Mary Drip Day ; for, ' If it rain only a drop on S. Mary's Day, it will rain off and on forty days.' The number forty plays a very prominent part in weather proverbs, and it seems possible that it may have arisen from the very frequent occurrence of this period in the Bible—*e.g.*, the rain fell on the earth for forty days, whilst Noah was in the ark. Moses was forty days on Mount Sinai ; Elijah forty days in the wilderness, &c. So, too, persons coming from infected places are kept in quarantine for forty days, either on ship-board or in some building set apart for the purpose before they are permitted to have their freedom, and the right of sanctuary was also limited to the same time.

There is a beautiful legend connected with the 1st July, which is S. Leonore's Day, S. Leonore being the bishop who converted and cultivated Brittany, which is given in ' The Silver Store,' where it is said that robin redbreast's corn is still a byword in Brittany for all small beginnings that prosper :—

' In a pleasant sunward hollow,
Of the barren purple fell,
They have built a rustic chapel,
Hung a little tinkling bell.

' There alone in Christ believing
Wait the brothers God's good time,
When shall spread the Gospel tidings
Like a flood from clime to clime.

* * *

Next they drain a weedy marish,
Praying in the midst of toil,
And with plough of rude construction
Draw slight furrows through the soil.

' They seek wheat. It was forgotten,
All their labour seems in vain.
The barbarian Kelts about them
Little know of golden grain.

' Said the Abbot, " God will help us
In this hour of bitter loss."
Then one spied a Robin Redbreast
Sitting on a wayside cross.

' Doubtless came the bird in answer
To the words the monk did speak,
For a heavy wheat ear dangled
From the Robin's polished beak.

' Then the brothers, as he dropt it,
Picked it up and careful sowed,
And abundantly in autumn
Reaped the harvest where they strewed

' Do you mark the waving glory
O'er the Breton hill-slopes flung ?
All that wealth from Robin Redbreast's
Little ear of wheat has sprung.

'Do you mark the many churches
Scattered o'er that pleasant land?
All results are of the preaching
Of that venerable band.

'Therefore, Christian, small beginnings
Pass not by with lip of scorn;
God may prosper them as prospered
Robin Redbreast's ear of corn.' *

The 2nd July is the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a festival which was instituted by Pope Urban VI. (1378), in commemoration of the journey which the Blessed Virgin took into the mountains of Judea, in order to visit the mother of S. John the Baptist. The time was fixed for the period when she returned to Nazareth, rather than that on which she undertook her journey, because the latter would otherwise have fallen about Easter, and it was thought well that the two festivals should not come together. Pope Boniface IX. confirmed the day, but owing to the schisms which then divided the Church, the party holding with the anti-Pope at Avignon refused to receive it, and the festival was not generally recognised till the Council of Basle decided that the feast should be celebrated throughout the Western Church, and issued a decree to that effect in 1441. There are several proverbs belonging to this day, which was also dedicated to S. Processus and S. Martinian, who are mentioned in a Latin saying, which may be found in one of the Trinity MSS. of the 13th century :—

'Si pluit in festo Processi et Martiniani,
Quadragesima dies continuare solet.'

And also in another rhyme, given by Brand :—

'Si pluit in festo Processi et Martiniani,
Imber erit grandis et suffocatio grani ;'

while all the others belong to the Blessed Virgin. Thus, in Austria, they say :—

'Wenn's zu Maria regnen mag,
So regnet's noch manchen Tag.'

And the Belgians assert 'Quand notre Dame dit le jour de la Visitation à S. Jean, Nous ferons pleuvoir ! Cela gâté toute la récolte.' While the Danish peasants hold that if there be rain on this day, it will continue till S. Mary Magdalen's day, the 22nd of this month, and the *Calendrier des bons Laboureurs* adds that :—

'Deux jours alors que Marie,
L'on visite s'il fait pluie.
Asseurez-vous que les filles
Cueilleront bien peu de noisilles.'

While there is a German proverb, 'Wie die Mutter Gottes über das Gebirge geht so kehrt sie wieder zurück.'

* Rev. S. Baring-Gould.

The dog-days, I believe, begin by rights on the 3rd of July, and end on the 11th of August; but in the old Calendars, St. Margaret's Day, the 13th, was thought the first of the dog-days, whence the proverb, 'Margaris os canis est, caudum Laurentius (August 10) addit;' but probably the change in the style may have something to do with the alterations, since, according to the veracious Merlin, the canicular, or dog-days, are so called, not because dogs are at that season apt to run mad, but from the heliacal rising of Sirius, or the dog-star, as typical of the season of greatest heat, or wane of the summer. Certainly it is

'July to whom the dog-star in her train
S. James gives oysters and S. Swithin rain.'

And was it not Tom of Bedlam who said—

'Hark, I hear the dog-star bark?'

It has been further supposed that the heat of the season is the reason why the translation of S. Marten, of Tours (July 4th), is called S. Marten, of Bullion's day, in Scotland. Thus, it is said that if the deer rise dry and lie down dry on Bullion's day, there will be a good harvest. And again :—

'Bullion's day if ye be fair
For forty days 'twill rain na mair.'

And Du Cange calls it 'Festum Sancti Martini Bullientis vulgo etiamnum, Saint Martin Bouillant'—i.e., hot, boiling; while in France, it is the same, for—

'S'il pleut le jour de la Saint Marten bouillent,
Il pleut six semaines durant.'

The 7th of July is a day which chiefly concerns us English people, for it was the day of the translation of S. Thomas of Canterbury, whose death was formerly commemorated in the English Calendar, from which it was erased by Henry VIII.'s special order. Everybody who has got as far in their education as Little Arthur, knows the history of this our own great English martyr; how his unflinching support of the rights and privileges of the Church led to his receiving the reward of the crown 'which fadeth not away,' at the foot of an altar in his own cathedral church on the 28th December, 1170. That cathedral was desecrated for a year after the murder, during which time divine service was not performed. The bells were fastened, the pavement turned up, the hanging and pictures removed, and dirt suffered to accumulate within the walls. The reconsecration of the church at the end of this time naturally led the way to an influx of benefactions and honours to the cathedral itself. A shrine was prepared for the saint in the centre of the Trinity Chapel, and the translation of his remains from his tomb in the crypt took place on the 7th July, 1220. This ceremony was attended by King Henry, 'the young child,' the pope's legate, Archbishop Cardinal

Langton, the Archbishop of Rheims, and other prelates. The streets ran with wine, and all the surrounding villages were filled

‘Of bishops and abbots, parsons and priors,
Of earls and barons, and many knights thereto,
Of sergeants and of squires, and of husbandmen enow,
And of simple men eke of the land—so thick thither drew.’

The cost of this festival was immense, for we are told that the expenses of S. Thomas of Canterbury's translation were hardly paid off by the fourth successor of Archbishop Stephen Langton. But this was scarcely to be wondered at, seeing that the Archbishop provided refreshment, with provender for horses, along the road from London, for all who chose to attend; conduits were dispersed about the city; and nothing was wanting to do honour to the occasion. And the festival of S. Thomas of Canterbury became an anniversary of the highest splendour, not only in England, but in all Christendom. The golden crown of Scotland, taken from John Baliol at Dover, was offered at the shrine of S. Thomas by Edward I.; while Louis VII. of France, when he made a pilgrimage to Canterbury, offered the famous Regal of France, which Henry VIII. converted into a thumb-ring, and other offerings made the shrine so rich, that besides the shrine-keeper, whose duty it was to watch night and day over the accumulated treasures, a troop of fierce dogs was also kept, who were let loose at night to roam about the cathedral.

I do not know if the Canterbury bells, which grow wild in the Kent and Surrey lanes and hedgerows, are really dedicated to S. Thomas of Canterbury; but at any rate they are indirectly connected with him, having been so-called because they were thought to resemble the small bells with which the horses of the pilgrims to his shrine were decorated. It is provoking that I can find no proverb connected with S. Thomas of Canterbury. The *Clavis Calendaria*, indeed, gives a rhyme which is there said to date from the time of Henry II. :—

‘As long as there is goose and gander,
So long will we remember Alexander,’

and the penance which he inflicted on the king; but I am afraid that in this case the goose and gander have gained the day. Everything, however, tends to show how famous S. Thomas was. The Watling Street, which crossed the country from Chester to London, and thence by Canterbury to the sea, the way by which Chaucer's pilgrims went to Canterbury, and which was the great pilgrim's path of England, gave its name for this reason to the Galaxy, or Milky Way. Chaucer (*House of Fame*) describing the regions of heaven, says :—

‘Lo there (quod he), cast up thine eye,
See yonder to the galaxie,
The which men clepe the Milky Way,
For it is whyte, and some par fay
Y-callin it hauve Watling Street.’

In the *Complaynt of Scotland* it is said of a comet, 'It aperes oft in the guykt circle callit circulus lacteus, the quhilk the marinalis callis Vatlant Street ;' while in the *Vigil* of Gawin Douglas—

' Of every stern the twynkling notes he
That in still hevin move cours we see
Arthur's house and Hyades betokening rain,
Watling strete, the Horne, and the Charle waine,
The feirs Orion with his golden glave.*

But according to Mr. King (*The Great Shrines of England*), the Galaxy has always been connected, both in this and other countries, with greater lines of pilgrimage. One of its Turkish names is the 'Hadjis way,' as indicating the road to Mecca. In Italy and France, and in the north of Europe, it has been called 'St. Jago's way,' 'Jacobsstrasse'—the road to Compostella; while in Norfolk it became 'Walsingham way'—the long streaming path of light that pointed towards the great shrine of the Virgin. Moreover, the Finns and Lithuanians called it 'the birds' way, or the way of souls,' for they believed that the soul took the form of a bird on leaving the body, and passed by that road to heaven.

Passing over some unimportant weather-wise sayings, we come to the 15th, S. Swithin's Day, of which the proverb says :—

' S. Swithin's day if thou be fair
'Twill rain for forty days no mair.
S. Swithin's day if thou dost rain
For forty days it will remain.'

While another saying runs :—

' All the tears S. Swithin can cry
S. Bartholomew's dusty mantle wipes dry.'

Mr. Baring-Gould says that none of the stories which are told in explanation of the popular notion that if it rains on S. Swithin's Day, it will rain for forty days after, are satisfactory, and they only seem to prove the total ignorance which prevails regarding it; but it has been suggested that the directions that S. Swithin gave respecting his burial, 'that he should be buried outside the church, where passers-by might tread on his grave, and the *rain from the eaves drop upon it*,' may have given him his reputation as a weather saint. Tradition, however, asserts that the removal of his relics from the grave he had chosen, to the golden shrine prepared for them, was prevented by the saint's manifesting his displeasure by forty days of continual rain.† When it rains on the 15th, S. Swithin is said to be christening the apples; and, according to Brand, it is held very wrong to attempt to gather any apples before he has performed this ceremony; but I have never heard this part of the superstition myself. Any way, S. Swithin's emblem in the *Clog*

* Wright's edition, p. 254.

† Nevertheless, in 975, the saint's relics were translated by S. Athelwold, and in 1094 they were retranslated to the Cathedral of Winchester by Bishop Walkelin. The head of S. Swithin was, however, deposited at Canterbury.

Almanac is a most appropriate one—a shower of rain! S. Swithin, who is one of the most popular and well-known of our English saints, has fifty-one churches named in his honour in England; and various miracles have been attributed to him, which may be found recorded in an old versified life of this saint, where, among other good deeds, we are told that:—

‘Seynt Swithin his bishopricke to al goodnesse drough,
The towne also of Wynchestre he amended enough.’

The 20th July is S. Margaret’s Day; and in Galicia it is believed that if S. Margaret’s Day be dry, God will give us a fine autumn; while the Bohemians hold that harvest should begin on this day, and therefore say that S. Margaret puts the sickle to the corn; while S. Margaret and S. Mary Magdalen are connected in the German—

‘S. Margareth
Lässt uns die Nüsse geniessen.
S. Magdalene
Ist sie allein.’

These two saints are also connected in the *Catholic Florist*, where, however, the poppy, instead of the daisy, which is her real flower, is given to S. Margaret:—

‘Poppies a sanguine’ mantle spread
For the blood of the dragon S. Margaret shed.
Then under the wanton rose again
That blushes for penitent Magdalen.’

S. Margaret has always been a favourite saint in this country; and Alban Butler, in his *Lives of the Saints*, dates the ‘commencement of her celebrity in this island to the crusades.’ Be this as it may, it is certain that (according to the *Calendar of the Anglican Church*), next to the more popular dedications to Scripture saints, S. Margaret comes third on the list. S. Nicholas numbering about three hundred and eighty churches named in his honour; S. Lawrence, two hundred and fifty; S. Margaret, two hundred and thirty-eight; S. George, one hundred and seventy; and S. Martin about one hundred and sixty-five.

The proverbs for the 22nd, S. Mary Magdalene’s Day, deal chiefly with the nuts; for—

‘A la Madeleine
Les noix sont pleines.’

And there is an Italian saying which is almost precisely similar; while at Brescia it is said that ‘On S. Mary Magdalene’s Day the nuts are full;’ but, full or not, the children will open them.

The 25th is rich, as it is dedicated to two well-known saints, S. James the Great, the patron saint of Spain, and S. Christopher. According to the *Golden Legend*, this saint was a giant of great stature and still greater strength, who resolved to enter into the service of the most powerful master he could meet with, and obey him only. He first entered the service of a Christian king, but finding that whenever the devil was

mentioned the king crossed himself, he judged that the devil must be stronger than his master, and accordingly entered into his employ ; here too he observed that the devil used to avoid, as frightened, a cross by the wayside, and he at once left his service, for he saw that there was some one more powerful still. While he was masterless he met a hermit, who told him of the Cross, and of our Saviour, and as an acceptable service to Him, set him to carry pilgrims over a deep and dangerous ford. One night he heard a child calling, who 'prayed hym goodly to bere hym over the water ;' so Christopher lifted him on his shoulder and entered the stream ; but no sooner had he done so than the waves rose higher and higher, and 'the chyld waxed heavyer and heavyer, till it was even as a mountain of lead upon him, and it was with much ado that he reached the shore.' Then, setting down his burden, he said, 'Chylde, thou hast putte me in grete peryle. Thou wayest alle most as I had had alle the worlde upon me. I might bere no greater burden ;' and the child made answer—'Christopher, marvel thou nothing, for thou hast not only borne all the worlde upon thee, but its sins likewise, and also its Creator. I am Jesu Chryste, the Kinge whom thou servest in thys werke ; and that thou mayest know that I say truth, set thy staffe in the earthe, and to-morrow it shall bear flours and fruit, and anon he vanyshed from his eyen.' So Christopher did as he was commanded, 'and found on the morrow his staffe, which was like a Palmyer's, leaded with foliage and dates.' This legend, which is clearly allegorical, was one of the most popular subjects for mediæval frescos, especially as it was believed that whoever looked upon the image of this saint would never weary throughout that day, but have vigour and strength given him to go through his work and his labour till the evening ; accordingly, the following couplet is usually found beneath frescos of this saint :—

'Christophori Sancti speciem quicumque tuetur
Illo namque die nullo languore tenetur.' *

He was also thought to be a preserver against unnatural or sudden death, so that another inscription is sometimes to be met with :—

'Christofori faciem die quacumque tueris
Illa nempe die morte mala non morieris.'

S. James, the patron saint of Spain, owns all the proverbs belonging to this day, which in Germany they believe shows what the weather will be at Christmas. Thus :—

'Jakobi klar und rein,
Wird Christ fest kalt und frostig sein.'

So also they say :—

'Der Vormittag vom Jakobstag
Das Wetter bis Weihnacht deuten mag.'

This belief was shared by our ancestors ; for, in an ancient book, the *Husbandman's Practice*, an old rule for the husbandman is given : 'When

* *Cal. Aug.* p. 204.

it is fair three Sundays after S. James his day, it betokeneth that corn shall be very good, but if it raineth, then the corn withereth. S. James his day before noon betokeneth the winter-time before Christmas, and after noon it betokeneth the time after Christmas. If it be so that the sun shine on S. James his day, it is a token of cold weather; but if it rains thereon, it is a token of warm moist weather; but if it is between the two, then it is a token of neither too warm nor too cold.'

If there are any white clouds in the sky at sunrise on this day, then the Germans say:—

'Der Schnee blüht für nächsten Winter.'

There is a superstition current in England that whoever eats oysters on S. James's Day shall never want money for the rest of the year—a very simple recipe for growing rich, if true, but unfortunately it does not tally with another popular belief, recorded in Butler's *Dyet's Dry Dinner*, 1599,—'It is unseasonable and unwholesome in all months that have not an *r* in their names to eat oysters.' But the oysters are probably doubly connected with S. James, at least if Mr. Thom's conjecture is true, that in the grotto formed of oyster-shells and lighted with a votive candle, to which, on old S. James's Day (August 5th) the passer-by is entreated to contribute, by cries of 'Please remember the grotto!' we have a memorial of the world renowned shrine of S. James of Compostella, which may have been formerly erected on the anniversary of S. James's Day by poor persons, as an invitation to the pious who could not visit Compostella to show their reverence to the saint by almsgiving to their needy brethren. Any way, oysters are allowed to be sold in London (which city, by the by, levied a tax of twopence on every person going and returning by the river Thames on pilgrimage to S. James's shrine) after S. James's Day.

S. James was one of the six champions of Christendom, and it is hard to say which is most marvellous, his mythical or his legendary history. The former of these relates how—

'Now come we to St. James of Spain,
Who slew a mighty boar,
In hopes that he might honour gain,
But he must die therefore.'

Only he did not. While the latter tells how Monseigneur S. George and My Lord S. James more than once appeared on horseback, like the great twin-brothers at Lake Regillus, fighting for the Christian against the Moors, and how, independently of this, S. James made thirty-eight visible appearances,* mounted on his great white charger, to aid and encourage

* These appearances of St. Iago are alluded to in *Don Quixote*. 'I would fain know,' quoth Sancho, 'why the Spaniards call upon that same St. James, the destroyer of the Moors. Just when they are going to give battle they cry, "St. Iago and close Spain." Pray is Spain open that it wants to be closed up? What make you of that ceremony?' 'Thou art a very simple fellow, Sancho,' answered Don Quixote. 'Thou must know that Heaven gave to Spain this mighty champion of the Red

the Spaniards ; and how, being once asked who and what he was (for he was a stranger) he replied, 'I am a soldier, a kinsman of the Eternal King, a citizen and inhabitant of Compostella, and my name is James.'* Spanish writers endeavour to glorify their patron saint by giving him a noble descent, and for this purpose they assert that Zebedee was no peasant, but a mighty baron, who had many ships belonging to him, and whose sons, therefore, only fished for pleasure, not profit.

About the middle of the twelfth century a religious order of knight-hood, that of S. James of Compostella, sprang up in Spain ; it was originally formed for the protection of the pilgrims on their way to the shrine, and a descent of two degrees of gentle blood was required for admission into the order ; besides which, the Christian blood must be uncontaminated by any Jewish or Moorish mixture. A cross, finished like the blade of a sword, with the hilt crossleted, became the ensign of the order ; the centre of the crosslet being surmounted by the escalop shell, the badge of S. James, while the cross was painted red, and worn on a white cross mantle. But though the order was ostensibly for the protection of the pilgrim, the pilgrimage was not always such a peaceable affair as could be wished ; for instance, we are told in Mill's *History of Chivalry*, how, in 1434, when the Spanish Court was holding its festivities at Medina, a noble knight, named Sueno de Quinones, presented himself before the king, John II., and announced by a herald—'It is just and reasonable that anyone who has been so long in imprisonment as I have been should desire his liberty. . . . and I appear before you to state that I have been long bound in service to a noble lady, and, as is well known, . . . every Thursday I am obliged to wear a chain of iron round my neck ; but, with the aid of S. James, I have discovered a means of liberation. I and my nine companions propose, during the fifteen days that precede, and the fifteen days that follow the festival of that saint, to break three hundred lances with Milan points in the follow-

Cross for its patron and protector, especially in the desperate engagements which the Spaniards had with the Moors, and therefore they invoke him in all their martial encounters as their protector, and many times he has been personally seen cutting and slaying, overthrowing, trampling, and destroying the Moorish squadrons, of which I could give thee many examples deduced from authentic Spanish histories.'—*Don Quixote*, pt. ii. c. 58.

* 'The true name of this Saint, according to Ambrosio de Morallo, was Jacobo (that is, according to the Spanish form), taken, with little difference, from the Patriarch Jacob. A great alteration is that which we Spaniards have made, corrupting the word little by little till it has become the very different one we now use. From Santo Jacobo we shortened, as we commonly do with proper names, and said Santo Jacot. We cleft it again after this abbreviation, and by taking away one letter and altering another made it into Santiago. The alteration did not stop here, but because Yago, or Iago, by itself did not sound distinctly and well we began to call it Diago, as may be seen in Spanish writings of two or three hundred years old. At last, having passed through all these mutations, we rested with Diego for the ordinary name, reserving that of Santiago when we speak of the Saint.'—SOUTHEY'S *Pilgrim to Compostella*.

ing manner : three lances with every knight who shall pass this way on his road to the shrine of the saint ; armour and weapons shall be provided for such as travel in palmer's weeds ; and all noble ladies that shall go on pilgrimage unattended by a knightly escort must be contented to lose their right hand glove till a knight shall recover it by force of arms.' This ' notable emprise ' was carried out ; but when the thirty days had expired, it appeared that only sixty-eight knights had entered the lists against Sueno, and in seven hundred and twenty-seven encounters, only sixty-six lances had been broken. The judges of the tournament, however, declared that the number of lances broken had not been equal to the engagement. Yet, as this was not the fault of Sueno, they commanded the king-at-arms to take the chain from his neck, and to declare that the emprise had been achieved.'

The poorer pilgrims had also their difficulties to contend with, witness ' The tale of the cock and the hen,' where the two roasted fowls came alive in the dish, in order to prove to the unbelieving magistrate the innocence of the pilgrim whom he had hanged for theft, all which is duly set forth in Southey's *Pilgrim to Compostella*.

The 26th is dedicated to S. Anne, the mother of the Blessed Virgin, who is chiefly commemorated in the Italian Proverbs. For instance, rain on this day in north Italy is called ' S. Anne dower,' and at Milan they say :—

' Come l'é sane
La dote de Sant Anne.'

Or, how beautiful is the dower of S. Anna. Also, there is another Italian proverb, which says—' If it rains on S. Anne's Day, it will rain for a month and a week ;' while at Venice it is thought that on S. Anne's Day the July grape is ripe.

There is, I believe, no English proverb belonging to S. Anne, though she was one of the most popular saints in this country, and her name occurs as the burden of a ballad which was written as a skit against the Scotch, about the time of James I., when his countrymen were accused of enriching themselves at the expense of the English—

' Well met, Jackie, whither away ?
Shall we two have a word or tway ?
Thou wast so dirty the other day,
How the devil comes thou so gay ?
Ha, ha, ha, by sweet St. An !
Jackie is grown a gentleman.'

July is certainly rich in saints, for the 27th belongs to little S. Hugh, of Lincoln, who is one of the many children who were believed to have been murdered by the unhappy Jews, and whose fate was duly set forth in an old ballad, of which I can only remember a fragment, which I heard in Lincolnshire when I was a child—

' It rains, it rains in merry Lincoln,
It rains both great and small,
And all the schoolfellows in merry Lincoln
Must needs go play at the ball.'

' They tossed the ball up so high, so high,
And yet it came down so low.
The tossed the ball into the old Jew's house,
And broke that old Jew's window.'

' The old Jew's daughter she came out,
She was dressed in a gown so green.
" Come hither, come hither, thou young Sir Hugh,
And fetch thy ball again."

' "I dare not come, I dare not come,
Unless my schoolfellows come all ;
But I shall be flogged when I get home
For losing of my ball."

' She 'ticed him with an apple so green,
And likewise with a fig ;
But when she got hold of young Sir Hugh
She sticket him like a pig.'

There the story came to an abrupt conclusion, for my informant had forgotten the end, though she knew that there was an end, which was tantalizing, as she had not imagination enough to supply the deficiency ; and it was only in later life I found that the whole story was to be met with in Chaucer. S. Hugh was always a popular saint, for his name appears in another old song called ' The Shoemaker's Holiday '—

' Cold's the wind and wet's the rain,
St. Hugh be our good speed.
Ill's the weather that bringeth no gain,
Nor helps good hearts in need.'

S. Olaf, the great Norwegian saint, who was killed in battle at Stiklasted, in Værdal, on the 29th July, 1030, was canonized shortly after, and is therefore commemorated on that day. His shrine, which was at Drontheim, was not a whit behind that of S. Thomas, of Canterbury, or S. James, of Compostella, in magnificence, for it was of silver, inlaid with gold and precious stones, one single one of which cost Archbishop Walkendorf twenty lasts of butter (which would be about twenty tons). Certainly, one rather requires to know the price of butter in those days, in order to arrive at a proximate idea of the value of the stone, but anyway, the price must have been considerable.

There are numerous traditions and legends which are still current in Scandinavia, about this most unsaint-like of saints, and which all tend to show that many of the characteristics of both Odin and Thor were given to him on the suppression of heathenism in the north. Even the colour of his red beard was the same as Thor's, and also his enmity to the Trolls ; for when he was one day riding by Dalby Church, in Warmeland, a Troll wife called to him :—

' St. Olaf with thy beard so red
Thou sail'st too near my bathroom wall.'

To which the Saint at once made answer :—

‘Thou Troll wife with thy rock and wheel
 Shall turn to stone,
 And never more do shipmen harm.’ *

Another legend, given by Grimm in the *Deutsche Mythologie*, tells how the first church was built in Norway. King Olaf had it in his mind to build a church, the like of which should nowhere be seen. As he was thinking how to do this without overburdening his kingdom, he met a strange-looking man, who asked what was the matter, and the king told him how he had made a vow to build a church which should be larger than any other in the world. The stranger undertook to build the church single-handed, and to have it finished by a certain time, in return for which he was to have either the sun and moon, or S. Olaf himself. S. Olaf agreed, but he made a plan for the church, which he thought would effectually prevent the Troll finishing it by the fixed time. It was to be so large that seven priests could preach in it at one time, without disturbing each other, besides which all the carving, both outside and in, was to be of hard flint.

All this was done, but the roof and the spire had still to be completed, and S. Olaf once more wandered out into the forest in great perplexity, for he saw no way of getting out of his engagement. All at once he heard a child cry, and the mother began to comfort it, by saying ‘Hush ! hush ! to-morrow, Windy Weather, your father, will come home and bring with him either the sun and the moon, or S. Olaf himself.’ Delighted with this discovery, for he knew that the Trolls always lose their power if they are named by a Christian man, the king went home, and saw that the Troll was in the act of completing the spire. Then he called to him, and said : ‘Thou Wind and Weather, thou hast put the steeple awry ;’ and at these words the giant fell from the roof with a horrible crash, and broke into a great many pieces—and every piece was a flint stone !

There is another tradition, which tells how that, thanks to S. Olaf, there are no woods on the Farøe Islands, for it appears that S. Olaf, having inquired of some of the inhabitants whether they had any woods at home, they, thinking that he made the inquiry with a view to taxing them, replied ‘No.’ ‘Be it so,’ said the king ; and as he spoke the Farøe woods sank into the earth.

There are several English churches dedicated to S. Olaf—more especially the two near London Bridge—for, as he particularly distinguished himself in the destruction of London Bridge, when he came to help Etheldred to dislodge the Danes from London and Southwark, there can be little doubt that gratitude for the remembrance of this service led the English to preserve the memory of S. Olave in the dedication of these churches. Mr. Baring-Gould, in the *Lives of the Saints*,

* Thorpe’s *Northern Mythology*, vol. ii. p. 37.

July 29, 641, gives a description of the Battle of London Bridge from Ollar Swart, which has such a spirited ring in it, that I cannot resist quoting it :—

‘ London Bridge is broken down,
Gold is won and bright renown.
Shields resounding,
War-horns sounding,
Women shouting in the din.
Arrows singing,
Mailcoats ringing,
Odin makes our Olaf win.’

And Sigvat, the scald, relates, too :—

‘ At London Bridge stout Olaf gave
Odin’s law to his foemen brave
To win or die
Their foemen fly.
Some by the dyke side refuge gain,
Some in their tents on Southwark plain !
This sixth attack
Brought victory back.’

B. C. C.

THE THREE BRIDES.

BY CHARLOTTE M. YONGE.

CHAPTER XXII.

TIMES OUT OF JOINT.

‘ Alte der Meere
Komm und höre
Meine Frau, die Ilsebill
Will nicht als ich will !’

LIFE at Compton Poyntsett was different from what it had been when the two youngest sons had been at home, and Julius and Rosamond in the house. The family circle had grown much more stiff and quiet, and the chief difference caused by Mrs. Poyntsett’s presence was that Raymond was deprived of his refuge in her room. Cecil had taken a line of polite contempt. There was always a certain languid amount of indifferent conversation, ‘from the teeth outward,’ as Rosamond said. Every home engagement was submitted to the elder lady with elaborate scrupulousness, almost like irony. Visitors in the house, or invitations out of it, were welcome breaks, and the whirl of society which vaguely alarmed Joanna Bowater was a relief to the inhabitants of the hall.

Anne’s companionship was not lively for her mother-in-law, but she was brightening in the near prospect of Miles’s return, and they had established habits that carried them well through the evening. Anne covered screens and made scrap-books, and did other work for the bazaar,

and Mrs. Poynsett cut out pictures, made suggestions, and had associations of her own with the combinations of which Anne had little notion. Or she dictated letters which Anne wrote, and through all these was a kindly, peaceful spirit, most unlike the dreary alienation in which Cecil persevered.

To Cecil this seemed the anxious desire for her lawful rights. She had been used to spend the greater part of the evening at the piano, but her awakened eyes perceived that this was a cover to Raymond's conversations at his mother's sofa, so she sat tying knots in stiff thread at her macrame lace pillow, making the bazaar a plea for nothing but work. Raymond used to arm himself with the newspapers as the safest *point d'appui*, and the talk was happiest when it *only* languished, for it could do much worse.

'Shall you be at Sirenwood to-morrow, Cecil?' asked Mrs. Poynsett, as she was wheeled to her station by the fire after dinner. 'Will you kindly take charge of a little parcel for me? One of the Miss Strangeways asked me to look for some old franks, so Anne and I have been turning out my drawers.'

'Are they for sale?' asked Raymond.

'Yes,' said Cecil. 'Bee Strangeways is collecting; she will pay for all that are new to her, and sell any duplicates.'

'Has she many?' asked Mrs. Poynsett, glad of this safe subject.

'Quantities; and very valuable ones. Her grandfather knew everybody, and was in the ministry.'

'Was he?' said Raymond, surprised.

'Lord Lorimer?' said Mrs. Poynsett. 'Not when I knew them. He was an old-fashioned Whig, with some peculiar crotchets, and never could work with any Cabinet.'

'Beatrice told me he was,' said Cecil, stiffly.

'I rather think he was Master of the Buckhounds for a little while in the Grey Ministry,' said Mrs. Poynsett, 'but he gave it up because he would not vote with ministers on the poor laws.'

'I knew I was not mistaken in saying he was in the Ministry,' said Cecil.

'The Master of the Buckhounds is not in the Cabinet, Cecil,' said her husband.

'I never said he was. I said he was in office,' returned the infallible lady.

Mrs. Poynsett thought it well to interrupt by handing in an envelope franked by Sir Robert Peel; but Cecil at once declared that the writing was different from that which Bee already owned.

'Perhaps it is not the same Sir Robert,' said Mrs. Poynsett.

'She got it from the *Queen*, and they are all authenticated. The *Queen* newspaper, of course' (rather petulantly).

'Indisputable,' said Raymond; 'but this frank contained a letter from the second Sir Robert to my father.'

Mrs. Poyndsett made a sign of acquiescence, and Cecil pouted in her dignified way, though Mrs. Poyndsett tried to improve matters by saying, 'Then it appears that Miss Strangeways will have a series of Peel autographs, all in fact but the first generation.'

Common sense showed she was right, but Cecil still felt discontented, for she knew she had been resisted and confuted, and she believed it was all Mrs. Poyndsett's doing instead of Raymond's.

And she became as mute as Anne for the next half-hour, nor did either Raymond or his mother venture on starting any fresh topic lest there might be fresh jarring.

Only Anne presently came up to Mrs. Poyndsett and tenderly purred with her over some little preparation for Miles.

Certainly Anne was the most improved in looks of all the three brides, who had arrived just a year ago. The thin, scraggy Scotch girl, with the flabby, washed-out look, alternating with angular rigidity was gone, but the softening and opening of her expression, the light that had come into her eyes, and had made them a lovely blue instead of paly grey; the rose-tint on her cheeks, the delicate rounded contour of her face, the improved carriage of her really fine figure, the traces of style in the braiding of her profuse flaxen hair, and the taste that was beginning to conquer in the dress, were all due to the thoughts that the *Salamanca* might soon be in harbour. She sat among them still as a creature whose heart and spirit were not with them.

That some change must come was felt as inevitable by each woman, and it was Mrs. Poyndsett who began, one forenoon when her son had brought a lease for her to sign. 'Raymond,' said she, 'you know Church-house is to be vacant at Michaelmas. I wish you would look at it, and see what repairs it wants, and if the drawing-room windows could be made to open on the lawn.'

'Are you hoping to tempt Miles to settle there?'

'No, I fear there is no hope of that; but I do not think an old broken-backed invalid ought to engross this great house.'

'Mother, I cannot hear you say so! This is your own house!'

'So is the other,' she said trying to smile, 'and much fitter for my needs with Susan and Jenkins to look after me.'

'There is no fit place for you but this. You said that once.'

'Under very different circumstances. All the younger boys were still under my wing, and needed the home, and I was strong and vigorous. It would not have been right by them to have given up the place; but now they are all out in the world, and I am laid by, my stay here only interferes with what can be much better managed without me or my old servants.'

'I do not see that. If any one moves it should be ourselves.'

'You are wanted on the spot continually. If Sirenwood were in the market, that might not be so much amiss.'

'I do not think that likely. They will delay the sale in the hope of

Eleonora's marrying a rich man ; besides, Mr. Charnock has set his mind upon Swanslea. I hope *this* is from nothing Cecil has said or done ?'

'Cecil wishes to part then ? She has said nothing to me, but I see she has to you. Don't be annoyed, Raymond ; it is in the nature of things.'

'I believe it is all Lady Tyrrell's doing. The mischief such a woman can do in the neighbourhood !'

'Perhaps it is only what any friend of Cecil would advise.'

'It is the very reverse of what I intended,' said Raymond, shading his face.

'My dear Raymond, I know what you meant, and what you wish ; but I am also certain it is for no one's happiness to go on in this way.'

He groaned.

'And the wife's right comes first.'

'Not to this house.'

'But to this man. Indeed I see more hope of your happiness now than I did last year.'

'What, because she has delivered herself over bound hand and foot to Camilla Vivian ?'

'No, because she is altered. Last year she was merely vexed at my position in the house. Now she is vexed at my position with you.'

'Very unjustly.'

'Hardly so. I should not have liked your father to be so much devoted to his mother. Remember, jealousy is a smoke that cannot exist without some warmth.'

'If she had any proper feeling for me, she would show it by her treatment of you.'

'That would be asking too much when she thinks I engross you.'

'Mother, while you show such marvellous candour and generosity, and she——'

'Hush ! Raymond, leave it unsaid ! We cannot expect her to see more than her own side of the question. She has been put into an avowedly trying position, and does not deserve hard judgment for not being happy in it. All that remains is to relieve her. Whether by my moving or yours is the question. I prefer the Church-house plan.'

'Either way is shame and misery to me,' broke out Raymond in a choked voice.

'Nonsense,' said his mother, trying to be cheerful. 'You made an impracticable experiment, that's all. Give Cecil free scope, let her feel that she has her due, and all will come right.'

'Nothing can be done till after the Wilsborough business,' said Raymond, glad of the reprieve. He could not bear the prospect of banishment for his mother or himself from the home to which both were rooted ; and the sentence of detachment from her was especially painful when she seemed his only consolation for his wife's perverseness. Yet he was aware that he had been guilty of the original error, and was bound to

give such compensation to his wife as was offered by his mother's voluntary sacrifice. He was slow to broach the subject, but only the next morning came a question about an invitation to a dull house.

'But,' said Cecil, 'it is better than home.' She spoke on purpose.

'I am sorry to hear you say so.'

'I can't call it home where I am but a guest.'

'Well, Cecil, my mother offers to leave the home of her life and retire into Church-house.'

Cecil felt as if the screw she had been long working had come off in her hands. She frowned, she gazed, collecting her senses, while Raymond added, 'It is to my intense grief and mortification, but I suppose you are gratified.'

'Oh, it would never do!' she exclaimed to his surprise and pleasure.

'Quite right,' he returned. 'Just what I felt. Nothing can make me so glad as to see that you think the idea as shocking as I do.'

'Our going to Swanslea would be much better—far more natural, and no one could object. We could refurnish, and make it perfect; whereas nothing can be done to this place, so inconveniently built and buried in trees. I should feel much freer in a place of my own.'

'So that is what you meant, when I thought you were thinking of my mother?'

'I am obliged to take thought for myself when you take heed to no one but her,' said Cecil; and as the carriage was at that moment announced, she left him. Which was the most sick at heart it would be hard to say, the wife with the sense that she was postponed in everything to the mother, the husband at the alienation that had never before been so fully expressed. Cecil's errand was a council about the bazaar; and driving round by Sirenwood, Lady Tyrrell became her companion in the carriage. The quick eyes soon perceived that something had taken place, and confidence was soon drawn forth.

'The ice is broken, and by whom do you think?'

'By *la belle Mère*? Skilful strategy to know where the position is not tenable.'

'She wants to retreat to Church-house.'

'Don't consent to that.'

'I said I should prefer Swanslea for ourselves.'

'Hold to that, whatever you do. If she moves to the village you will have all the odium and none of the advantages. There will be the same daily haunt, and as to your freedom of action, there are no spies like the abdicated and their dependents. A very clever plan, but don't be led away by it.'

'No,' said Cecil resolutely, but after a moment: 'It would be inconvenient to Raymond to live so far away from the property.'

'Swanslea will be property too, and a ride over on business is not like strolling in constantly.'

'I know I shall never feel like my own mistress in a house of hers.'

‘Still less with her close by, with the Rectory family running in and out to exchange remarks. No, no, hold fast to insisting that she must not leave the ancestral halls. That you can do dutifully and gracefully.’

Cecil knew she had been betrayed into the contrary, but they were by this time in the High-street, bowing to others of the Committee on their way to the Town-hall, a structure of parti-coloured brick in harlequin patterns, with a peaked roof, all over little sham domes, which went far to justify its title of the Rat-house, since nothing larger could well use them. The façade was thus somewhat imposing; of the rear, the less said the better, and as to the interior, it was at present one expanse of dust, impeded by scaffold poles, and all the windows had large blotches of paint upon them.

It required a lively imagination to devise situations for the stalls, but Mrs. Duncombe valiantly tripped about, instructing her attendant carpenter with little assistance except from the well-experienced Miss Strange-ways. The other ladies had enough to do in keeping their plumage unsoiled. Lady Tyrrell kept on a little peninsula of encaustic tile, Cecil hopped across birdlike and unsoiled, Miss Slater held her carmelite high and dry, but poor Miss Fuller’s pale blue and drab, trailing at every step, became constantly more blended!

The dust induced thirst, Lady Tyrrell lamented that the Wilsborough confectioner was so far off and his ices doubtful, and Miss Slater suggested that she had been making a temperance effort by setting-up an excellent widow in the lane that opened opposite to them in a shop with raspberry vinegar, ginger beer, and the like mild compounds, and Mrs. Duncombe caught at the opportunity of exhibiting the sparkling water of the well which supplied this same lane. The widow lived in one of the tenements which Pettitt had renovated under her guidance, and on a loan advanced by Cecil, and she was proud of her work.

‘Clio Tallboys would view this as a triumph,’ said Mrs. Duncombe, as standing on the steps of the town hall, she surveyed the four tenements at the corner of the alley. ‘Not a man would stir in the business except Pettitt, who left it all to me.’

‘Taking example by the Professor,’ said Lady Tyrrell.

‘It is strange,’ said Miss Slater, ‘how much illness there has been ever since the people went into those houses. They are in my district, you know.’

‘You should make them open their windows,’ said Mrs. Duncombe.

‘They lay it on the draughts.’

‘And stuff up my ventilators. That is always the way they begin.’

The excellent widow herself had a bad finger, which was a great impediment in administering the cooling beverages, but these were so excellent as to suggest the furnishing of a stall therewith for the thirsty as something sure to be popular and at small expense. Therewith the committee broke up, all having been present but Miss Moy, whose absence was not

regretted, though apologised for by Mrs. Duncombe. 'I could not get her away from the stables,' she said. 'She and Bob would contemplate Dark Hag day and night, I believe.'

'I wouldn't allow it,' said Lady Tyrrell.

Mrs. Duncombe shrugged her shoulders and laughed. 'That's Mr. Moy's look out,' she said.

'You don't choose to interfere with her emancipation,' said Lady Tyrrell.

'Clio would tell you she could take care of herself at the stables as well as anywhere else.'

'Query?' said Lady Tyrrell. 'Don't get into a scrape, Bessie! Does your Captain report on the flirtation with young Simmonds?'

'Who is he?' asked Cecil.

'The trainer's son,' said Bessie. 'It is only a bit of imitation of Aurora Floyd.'

'You know she's an heiress,' said Lady Tyrrell. 'You had better take care how you put such a temptation in his way.'

'I don't suppose the Moys are anybody,' said Cecil.

'Not in your sense, my dear,' said Lady Tyrrell laughing; 'but from another level there's a wide gap between the heiress of Proudfoot Lawn and the heir of the training stables.'

'Cecil looks simply disgusted,' said Bessie. 'She can't bear the Moys betwixt the wind and her nobility.'

'They are the great drawback to Swanslea, I confess,' said Cecil.

'Oh! are you thinking of Swanslea?' cried Mrs. Duncombe.

'Yes,' said Lady Tyrrell, 'she is one to be congratulated on emancipation.'

'Well, can I do so?' said Mrs. Duncombe. 'Don't I know what mothers-in-law are? Mine is the most wonderful old Goody, with exactly the notions of your meek Mrs. Miles.'

'Incompatibility decidedly,' said Lady Tyrrell.

'Only she was the Spartan mother combined with it,' continued Mrs. Duncombe. 'When Bob was a little urchin, he once, in anticipation of his future tastes, committed the enormity of riding on a stick on Sunday, so she locked him up till he had learnt six verses of one of Watts's hymns about going to Church being like a little heaven below, isn't it?'

'Increasing his longing that way,' said Lady Tyrrell.

'She doesn't even light the drawing-room fire on Sunday for fear people should not sit in their rooms and meditate,' continued Mrs. Duncombe. 'Bob manages to be fond of her through all; but she regularly hates me.'

'Not very wonderful,' said Lady Tyrrell laughing. 'I suppose there is a charming reciprocity of feeling.'

'I think I can afford to pity her,' said Mrs. Duncombe lightly. 'Just fancy what I must have been to her! You know I was brought up in a convent at Paris. The very bosom of the scarlet woman.'

‘But,’ interrupted Cecil, ‘you were never a Roman Catholic, Bessie!’

‘Oh! dear no, the Protestant boarders were let entirely alone. There were only two of us, and we lay in bed while the others went to mass, and played while they went to confession, that was all. I was an orphan; never remember my mother, and my father died abroad. Luckily for me Bob was done for by my first ball. Very odd, little red-haired thing like me; but every one is ticketed, I believe. My uncle was glad enough to get rid of me, and poor old Mrs. Duncombe was unsuspecting till we went home, and then!’

‘And then?’

‘Cecil may have some faint idea!’

‘Of what you underwent?’

‘She wanted to begin on me as if I were a wild savage heathen, you know! I believe she nearly had a fit when I declined a prayer meeting, and as to my walking out with Bob on Sunday evening!’

‘Did she make you learn Watts’s hymns?’

‘No! but she did what was much worse to poor Bob. She told him she had spent the time in prayer and humiliation, and the poor fellow very nearly cried.’

‘Ah, those mothers have such an advantage over their sons,’ said Lady Tyrrell.

‘I determined I would never go near her again after that,’ said Mrs. Duncombe. ‘Bob goes; he is really fond of her; but I knew we should keep the peace better apart. I let her have the children now and then, when it is convenient, and oddly enough they like it; but I shall soon have to stop that, for I won’t have them think me a reprobate; and she has thought me ten times worse ever since I found out that I had brains and could use them.’

‘Quite true,’ said Camilla; ‘there’s no peacemaker like absence.’

‘The only pity is that Swanslea is no further off,’ returned Bessie.

And so it was that Cecil, backed by her two counsellors, held her purpose, and Raymond sadly spoke of the plan of separation to Julius. Both thought Mrs. Poynsett’s own plan the best, though they could not bear the idea of her leaving her own house. Raymond was much displeased.

‘At least,’ he said, ‘there is a reprieve till this frantic fortnight is over. Fancy your exemption from the turmoil.’

‘I wish you would exempt yourself from the races,’ said Julius. ‘The mischief they have done in these villages is incalculable! The very men-servants are solicited to put into sweepstakes, whenever they go into Wilsbro’; and only this morning Mrs. Hornblower has been to me about her son.’

‘I thought he was the great feather in Herbert Bowater’s cap.’

‘Showing the direction of the wind only too well. Since Herbert has been inflicted with the general insanity, poor Harry Hornblower has lapsed into his old ways, and is always hanging about the “Three

Pigeons" with some of the swarm of locusts who have come down already to brawl round the training stables. This has come to Truelove's ears, and he has notice of dismissal. At the mother's desire I spoke to Truelove, but he told me that at last year's races the lad had gambled at a great rate, and had only been saved from dishonesty by detection in time. He was so penitent that Truelove gave him another trial, on condition that he kept out of temptation; but now he has gone back to it, Mr. Truelove thinks it the only way of saving him from some fresh act of dishonesty. "It is all up with them," he says, "when once they take that turn."

'You need not speak as if I were accountable for all the blackguardism.'

'Every man is accountable who lends his name and position to bolster up a field of vice.'

'Come, come Julius. Remember what men have been on the turf.'

'If those men had withheld their support, fashion would not have led so many to their ruin.'

'Hundreds are present without damage. It is a hearty out-of-doors country amusement, and one of the few general holidays that bring all ranks together.'

'You speak of racing as it has been or might be in some golden age,' said Julius. 'Of course there is no harm in trying one horse's speed against another, but look at the facts, and say whether it is right to support an amusement that becomes such an occasion of evil.'

'Because a set of rascals choose to bring their villainies there, you would have the sport of the whole neighbourhood given up. "No cakes and ale" with a vengeance!'

'The cakes and ale that make a brother offend ought to be given up.'

'That sentences all public amusements.'

'Not necessarily. The question is of degree. Other amusements may have evil incidentally connected with them, and may lead to temptation, but it is not their chief excitement. The play or the opera is the prime interest, and often a refined and elevated one, but at races the whole excitement depends upon the horses, and is so fictitious that it needs to be enhanced by this betting system. No better faculty is called into play. Some few men may understand the merits of the horse; many more and most of the ladies simply like the meeting in numbers, but there is no higher faculty called out, and in many cases the whole attraction is the gambling, and the fouler wickedness in the background.'

'Which would be ten thousand times worse, if all gentlemen stood aloof.'

'What good do these gentlemen do beyond keeping the contest honourable and the betting in which they are concerned? Do not they make themselves decoys to the young men on the border land who would stay away if the turf were left to the mere vulgar? Why should they not leave it to drop like bull-baiting or cock-fighting?'

‘Well done, Julius!’ said Raymond. ‘You will head a clerical crusade against the turf, but I do not think it just to compare it with those ferocious sports which were demoralising in themselves; while this is to large numbers simply a harmless holiday and excuse for an outing, not to speak of the benefit to the breed of horses.’

‘I do not say that all competitions of speed are necessarily wrong, but I do say that the present way of managing races makes them so mischievous that no one ought to encourage them.’

‘I wonder what Backsworth and Wilson would say to you! It is their great harvest. Lodgings for those three days pay a quarter’s rent; and where so many interests are concerned, a custom cannot lightly be dropped.’

‘So thought the craftsmen of Ephesus.’

‘Well,’ said Raymond with a sigh, ‘it is not pleasure that takes me. I shall look on with impartial eyes, if that is what you wish.’

Poor Raymond! it was plain that he had little liking for anything that autumn. He rode over to Swanslea with Cecil, and when he said it was six miles off, she called it four; what he termed bare, marshy and dreary was in her eyes open and free, his swamp was her lake, and she ran about discovering charms and capabilities where he saw nothing but damp and dry rot, and, above all, banishment.

Would she have her will? Clio would have thought her lecture had taken effect, and mayhap, it added something to the general temper of self-assertion, but in fact Cecil had little time to think, so thickly did gaieties and preparations crowd upon her. It was the full glory and importance of the member’s wife, her favourite ideal, but all the time her satisfaction was marred by secret heartache as she saw how wearily and formally her husband dragged through whatever fell to his lot, saw how jaded and depressed he looked, and heard him laugh his company laugh without any heart in it. She thought it all his mother’s fault, and meant to make up for everything when she had him to herself.

Julius had his troubles. When Rosamond found that races were what she called his pet aversion, she resisted with all her might. Her home associations were all on fire again. She would not condemn the pleasures she had shared with her parents, by abstinence from them any more than she would deviate from Lady Rathforlane’s nursery management, to please Mrs. Poyntsett and Susan. A bonnet which Julius trusted never to see in church was purchased in the face of his remark that every woman who carried her gay attire to the stand made herself an additional feather on the hook of evil. At first she laughed, and then grew tearfully passionate in protests that nothing should induce her to let her brothers see what their own father did turned into a crime; and if they went without her to take care of them and fell into mischief, whose fault would that be?

It was vain to hint that Tom was gone back to school, and Terry cared

more for the Olympic dust than that of Backsworth. She had persuaded herself that his absence would be high treason to her father, whom she respected far more at a distance than when she had been struggling with his ramshackle, easy-going ways. Even now, she was remonstrating with him about poor Terry's present misery. His last half year had been spent under the head master, who had cultivated his historical and poetical intelligence, whereas Mr. Driver was nothing but an able crammer, and the moment the lad became interested and diverged from routine, he was choked off because such things would not 'tell.' If the 'coach' had any enthusiasm it was for mathematics, and thitherwards Terry's brain was undeveloped. With misplaced ingenuity, he argued that sums came right by chance, and that Euclid was best learnt by heart, for 'the pictures' simply confused him, and when Julius, amazed at finding so clever a boy in the novel position of dunce, tried to find out what he did know of arithmetic, his ignorance and inappreciation were so unfathomable that Julius doubted whether the power or the will was at fault. At any rate he was wretched in the present, and dismal as to the future, and looked on his brother-in-law as in league with the oppressors for trying to rouse his sense of duty.

Remonstrance seemed blunted and ineffective everywhere. When Herbert Bowater tried to reclaim Harry Hornblower into giving up his notorious comrades, he received the dogged reply, 'Why should not a chap take his pleasure as well as you?'

With the authority at once of clergyman and squire's son, he said, 'Harry, you forget yourself. I am not going to discuss my occupations with you.'

'You know better,' rudely interrupted the lad. 'Racketing about all over the country, and coming home late at night. You'd best not speak of other folks!'

As a matter of fact, Herbert had never been later than was required by a walk home from a dinner, or a very moderate cricket supper; and his conscience was clear as to the quality of his amusements; but instead of, as hitherto speaking as youth to youth, he used the set language of the minister to the insulting parishioner. 'I am sorry I have disturbed Mrs. Hornblower, but the case is not parallel. Innocent amusement is one thing—it is quite another to run into haunts that have already proved dangerous to your principles.'

'Harry Hornblower laughed. 'It's no go coming the parson over me, Mr. Bowater! It's well known what black coats are, and how they never cry out so loud upon other folks as when they've had a jolly lark among themselves. No concealment now, we're up to a thing or two, and parsons, and capitalists, and squires will have to look sharp.'

This oration, smacking of 'The Three Pigeons' was delivered so loud as to bring the mother on the scene. 'O Harry, Harry, you aren't never speaking like that to Mr. Bowater.'

'When folks jaw me about what's nothing to them, I always give them

as good as they bring. That's my principle,' said Harry, flinging out of the house, while the curate tried to console the weeping mother, and soon after betook himself to his rector with no mild comments on the lad's insolence.

'Another warning how needful it is for us to avoid all occasion for misconstruction,' said Julius.

'We do, all of us,' said Herbert. 'Even that wretched decoction, Fuller, and that mere dictionary, Driver, never gave cause for imputations like these. What has the fellow got hold of?'

'Stories of the last century "two bottle men,"' said Julius, 'trumped up by unionists now against us in these days. The truth is that the world triumphs and boasts whenever it catches the ministry on its own ground. Its ideal is as exacting as the saintly one.'

'I say, Rector,' exclaimed the curate, after due pause, "you'll be at Evensong on Saturday? The ladies at Sirenwood want me to go to Backsworth with them to hear the band.'

'Cannot young Strangeways take care of his sisters?'

'I would not ask it, sir, but they have set their heart on seeing Road House, and want me to go with them because of knowing Dr. Easterby. Then I'm to dine with them, and that's the very last of it for me. There's no more croquet after this week.'

'I am thankful to hear it,' said Julius, suppressing his distaste that the man he most revered, and the place which was his haven of rest, should be a mere lion for Bee and Conny, a slight pastime before the regimental band!

(To be continued.)

A YORK AND A LANCASTER ROSE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'JANET'S HOME.'

CHAPTER XIII.

'L'AMI DES ENFANS.'

Nothing further was heard about Lady Dunallan's plan till the evening of the last school day before the Easter holidays, and then, while the children were seated at tea, Rose's two godmothers appeared at the school-room door together. The holidays had begun with this evening, for the Fräulein, who was going to pay a fortnight's visit to some friends in the country, had ordered her tea to be taken to her own room, where she was busy packing up, and the boys had returned from college with no work to do, and in rather an excited frame of mind. Lucy Fanshawe had run in just before tea-time, and Rose, forgetting the danger of increasing noise by numbers, had pressed her to stay for tea, and was now enjoying the hubbub of English talk and the shouts of laughter provoked by Lucy's

fun as much as any of the party. Nurse Lewis had looked in once or twice to beg them to be moderate, and to remind them to keep in one room, and not to distract their mamma's poor head more than it was distracted by slamming doors every ten minutes, but no one, not even Rose, had been in the mood to pay much heed to her warnings. A quick glance that passed between Lady Dunallan and Aunt Rachel, after glancing at the merry party collected round the tea-table, brought anxious thoughts back to Rose's mind.

'Poor little things,' Lady Dunallan said with a sigh to Aunt Rachel, 'how happy they are. Well, it is certainly a blessing that children don't know what anxiety is, and can't look forward like their elders. One would not have it otherwise.'

Rose did not hear the words, but she guessed that something was being said that referred to her mother, and she looked wistfully from one god-mother to another, when they took their places among the children at the tea-table. There was, however, nothing new to be read in Aunt Rachel's quiet face, and now that Lady Dunallan had taken Willie on her knee and begun to play with him, she looked quite as cheerful as usual.

Perhaps, Rose thought, she had been mistaken about the meaning of that first glance, she hoped she had, and yet when Lady Dunallan began to speak about her plan Rose felt certain there was a deeper design in it than just to furnish them all with something to do in the holidays. It was a plot to keep the house quiet, and Lady Dunallan and Aunt Rachel must have a strong reason for being so very earnest on that point as they clearly were.

'The boys may run away,' Lady Dunallan said as soon as tea was over. 'My plan does not concern them. They are going from home for the holidays I understand, and we shall hold our consultations better alone, for I am afraid they will look down on my poor little bribe to industry. Let us move to that round work-table in the window recess; I am a judge of needle-work, and should like to see what you have all been doing in that line of late. I think your mother told me once that you each had a drawer for work in this circular table, and that Nurse Lewis gave sewing lessons on Saturday afternoons.'

'That was before the Fräulein came,' said Maggie, 'we never have time for sewing now; and I really think we should almost have forgotten how to do it if Lucy Fanshawe had not persuaded us at Christmas to begin some clothes for our dolls that have never been finished, and if Rose had not taken a fancy lately to try to turn some of them into frocks for poor babies. We had all lost our thimbles till then, and Florence's is missing still, and we have only half a pair of scissors between us.'

'One pair and a half,' corrected Rose; 'you forget that I fished my scissors and thimble out of the hole in the rocking-horse the day after I bought my "mother's" bag.'

'Which is your drawer, Rose?' said Lady Dunallan.

‘It’s in a great muddle I’m afraid,’ said Rose, ‘for I have been putting all the scraps and odds and ends I could lay hold of into it, and I meant to have had a grand sorting out on the first holiday ; but how odd, some one has been putting it tidy for me, it opens quite easily. Oh ! Aunt Rachel, what lovely things ! Real good stuff for frocks and caps, and pinafores instead of rubbish, cut out and fixed too, all ready to begin. Did you do this while we were at college this morning, Aunt Rachel ?’

Aunt Rachel’s answer was drowned in a chorus of exclamations that came from the owners of the other drawers, who had by this time pulled them open and were busy taking out their contents. In each were found plain but pretty materials for a child’s petticoat, frock, out-door cape, and pinafore, and the three little divisions at the mouth of each drawer were furnished with serviceable scissors, new silver thimbles (sorted to the size of the fingers that were to wear them), pretty needle-books (with backs of Tunbridge Wells ware), and boxes to match, filled with hooks and eyes and buttons of useful sizes. The circular table held five drawers, and Aunt Rachel offered the contents of the fifth to Lucy Fanshawe if she liked to undertake to make up the material and join the working party, an offer which Lucy joyfully accepted.

‘She is by far the quickest and neatest needle-woman of us all,’ said Rose. ‘How lovely it will be, why we shall have new frocks for all the Marshalls, and for another little girl besides ; for Mary Ann, may it be, Aunt Rachel, the girl with the bonnet at the back of her head, who said she was always unlucky ? She won’t call herself unlucky when she has a merino frock and cape like those in Lucy Fanshawe’s drawer, will she, Aunt Rachel ?’

‘We shall see,’ said Aunt Rachel. ‘It is one thing to have the materials cut out and prepared in one’s work-drawers, and quite another to have put in all the stitches and produced wearable frocks and petticoats and capes by the end of the holidays.’

‘Oh, Aunt Rachel, don’t you think we shall all do our parts ?’ cried Rose.

‘I had rather not give an opinion,’ said Aunt Rachel smiling, ‘or say how many beginnings of garments that looked very much as if they were never meant to be finished I picked out of some one’s drawer.’

‘I did mean to finish them, indeed,’ said Rose, ‘only planning and beginning are so much the most interesting.’

‘Precisely,’ said Aunt Rachel, ‘and you see it is steady, monotonous work, and finishing we want ; there are generally plenty of people to plan.’

‘I hope I shall begin to be a finisher now,’ said Rose. ‘Aunt Rachel, it was very good of you to put purple stuff into my drawer, I do love purple ; and when I get very tired of stitching I shall think how nice Rose Marshall will look in a purple frock, and that will make me feel quite fresh again.’

‘Yes, you have an advantage over Lucy, and Maggie, and Florence, in knowing the children for whom you are working. You ought to set an example of zeal.’

‘I wish, Aunt Rachel, you would take us all to see the Marshalls, and Mary Anne, before we begin to work,’ said Florence.

‘Your mother would not like it, nor would Mrs. Fanshawe. I will bring Rose Marshall and Mary Anne here when the frocks are finished, that you may see them on; but, meanwhile, three of you will have to be satisfied with such a notion of the child she is working for as Rose can give. I have no doubt she will paint them *couleur de Rose*.’

‘Aunt Rachel! I could not make out Mary Anne, and Clara, and Susie, and Polly to be nicer, or shabbier, or dirtier than they are.’

‘Well,’ said Lady Dunallan, ‘I don’t wish to hold out a bribe for perseverance to anybody. I think you have all got sufficient motive for working steadily; but I want to have something more to do with this Easter holiday scheme than just having seen the stuff put into the drawer, so I shall begin by telling you a story. About sixty years ago there were four little girls, living in a country house, who at the time I am thinking of were about the ages of the four sisters I am talking to now. I was the third sister, and one of us, the one next in age above me, had a very lively imagination, and a great talent for mimicry, and kept us all alive with her frolics and practical jokes. I smile sometimes to myself now when I recollect the odd plays we invented in our long play-hours, and the absurd names we gave to every single thing and person we ever came across till we had almost invented an original language of our own.’

‘You talked English then, and had long play hours—how delightful!’

‘But in some ways there was more strictness in our bringing up than you have had any experience of, and to set against our English-speaking privileges, we had very few story-books. One new one, such as you would read and forget in half-an-hour, would serve us as the frame-work of all our plays for at least a year.’

‘But had you no lessons?’

‘Oh, yes! we had a kind old governess, under whom we studied for part of the morning, but the afternoons were our own, till one day, when our father told us that a French gentleman was coming on three afternoons in every week for the future to teach us to speak French. We durst not grumble, but we felt very much injured, and we resolved among ourselves that this new intrusive teacher should have hard times of it. His name was M. le Marquis de Raubaudet. He was a little withered-looking, meek old man, with white hair, tied back from his forehead with a black ribbon, and hanging in a pig-tail down his back. He was an *émigré*; his wife and his two sons had been guillotined in Paris during the Reign of Terror, and he had fled to England with four little orphan grandchildren, and was living with them in great poverty in a lodging in a country town near us when my father found him out. Our father and

mother treated him with the greatest respect, but we four girls, I am sorry to say, could only see the little oddities of dress and manner that were more the result of his misfortunes than any parts of his original character. His meekness and strange absence of mind encouraged us to play tricks upon him, and even, I am ashamed to say, to mimic his old world courtesies and elaborate set speeches to his very face. I can only hope now that his pre-occupation of mind really did make him as blind to our stupid little jokes as we then believed him to be. The only reason we ever had to suspect he was more conscious of our folly than he appeared to be, was that our most audacious tricks were sure to be followed by some gracious act of kindness on his part, offered so pointedly to the chief offender, that at last our hearts and consciences began to feel some compunctions. Our last and worst offence against him was perpetrated one day when Frances incited a school-boy cousin to steal behind his chair, while he was reading Racine aloud to us, and with a sharp pair of scissors snip away at his *queue* till the whole mass of hair fell to the ground. If he discovered the loss when the reading was over, we did not know, for he said nothing about it, neither at the time, nor ever afterwards; but we noticed that he never offered to read Racine, nor indeed any other of his favourite authors aloud to us again. He appeared at the next lesson with a false *queue*, exactly like the real one, and drew from his pocket four gaily-bound little volumes, entitled *L'Ami des Enfants*, which he presented to Frances with a smile, observing that he believed he had hitherto mistaken our taste and capacity, and that for the future he would endeavour to provide reading suited to our understanding. Some of the stories in the book he had now brought us had, he told us, been written for his children when they were as young as we now were, but as reading these tales only brought painful recollections and useless regrets into the minds of his little granddaughters, he would beg our acceptance of the copy the author had many years ago presented to him.'

'I wonder if it is the same *L'Ami des Enfants* grandmamma has?' interrupted Rose. 'Was it four little thin volumes, bound in brown, and full of nice queer stories of little boys and girls living in chateaux, who wear swords and grand dresses, and powder their hair, and curtsy and bow to each other in the middle of their plays?'

'Our copy was bound in purple, with gilt leaves, but it was the same book. It was written for French children before the first Revolution, and the manners and customs described were not quite so strange to us as no doubt they are to you. We certainly preferred *L'Ami des Enfants* to Racine greatly, and were now in such haste to begin our reading, which came after a due portion of French conversation had been got through, that we never dreamed of delaying our pleasure by inattention or nonsense. Sometimes the kind old man would increase our enjoyment of a favourite story by relating the true circumstances on which his friend the author had founded this tale, and from this would come out

charming anecdotes of M. de Raubaudet's life in France, when he had been the lord of a grand old chateau, and his children had done the good actions towards the starving peasants of which our book was so full. He never seemed to think it strange or wrong, as we did, that there should have been so many starving people round such grand houses; he seemed to take that as a matter of course, and to think there was a great deal of virtue in the children of the chateau troubling themselves at all about the sufferings of the children in the hovels at their gates. There was one story which he never could hear us read without taking his large faded silk pocket-handkerchief from his pocket, and applying it many times to his old eyes. The tale related how four little girls resigned the pleasure of a grand new year's fancy dress ball, and employed the time and money saved by this act of self-denial, in buying and making complete wardrobes for four little orphan peasant girls whom they had found almost naked in a hovel, built of branches, and trees, and mud, by the road-side.

'The father and mother had died of famine fever, and the children were in the last stage of starvation when the chateau children found them out and brought help in time to save them. The catastrophe had occurred on M. de Raubaudet's own estate, and the four little girls who gave up the ball were his own four daughters. He used to remark with tears in his eyes, that it had been well for them and for him that their charity had made them good seamstresses, for that they had had to depend for their own daily bread on the art they had once practised for others. We were all so fond of this story that the volume learned to open at the place of its own accord; and reading it so often inspired us with an ambition to imitate the good action of the four French children of long ago.

'Winter set in early and with great severity that year, and Frances, who was very observing and a little bit of a gossip, discovered that M. de Raubaudet's four little granddaughters went on wearing their shabby summer frocks and thin tippets long after we were equipped in substantial winter raiment. We used to pass them on the road sometimes when we drove through the village with our mother, walking two and two with the old French servant who had followed them in all their wanderings. A prim little group of girls, with pretty pale faces all pinched and blue with cold. We dared not make them a present of warm clothing without excuse; our father and mother had offered assistance and been refused, and M. de Raubaudet's pride and independence were up in arms at the least hint of patronage. But our Frances set her sharp wits to work, and hit upon a really clever contrivance. Our father's birthday fell late in November, and it had always been our custom to get up some sort of little surprise or entertainment in his honour, our mother taking care that funds to carry out any sensible device we might hit upon should be forthcoming. This year we resolved to act a little play in French, and we told our mother that if she would give us the materials we required, and allow her maid to assist in cutting out, we would make ourselves all

the dresses we wanted for the acting. The play was chosen of course from *L'Ami des Enfants*, and was nothing else than a representation of the good action of the four little French girls, which, luckily for us, was related in the form of dialogues easily learned by heart. M. de Raubaudet's granddaughters acted the part of the chateau children, and were dressed all alike (in the prettiest and most serviceable winter costumes our mother's maid could devise and we execute), in order to take that memorable walk in the wood during which they discovered us—four little peasants shivering in picturesque rags in a mud house. The next scene showed the chateau children attired in nice indoor dresses, taking off the little peasants' rags, and dressing them in the good coarse clothes they had made themselves at the cost of giving up their fancy ball costumes. We all acted our part to perfection when our father's birthday came. The French children looked charming in their pretty new winter dresses, and were as dignified and condescending to the little peasants as if they had really lived in a chateau all their lives, and we kissed their hands and knelt before them invoking blessings, and were as much amazed at their condescension and goodness as French peasant children before the Revolution would have been required to be. M. de Raubaudet was present at the performance and applauded our acting, and complimented us on the purity of our French accent in his grandest manner. What was more to the purpose and gave us far greater pleasure, when the hour of departure arrived—he allowed his granddaughters to take leave of us attired in their acting dresses, and saw them take their seats in the carriage that was to convey them home, wrapped in the warm pelisses and furs, we had provided for the walk in the play. Stephanie, the eldest of the four French girls, was loud in her expressions of delight at seeing herself and her sisters 'si parfaitement bien mise,' but her grandfather only smiled at her raptures, and stroked her head in his absent way without answering a word.'

'But did he never thank you for what you had done for his granddaughters?'

'Not in so many words. At the next lesson we had, he directed us to read over again the story we had turned into a play, in order, he said, that he might correct one or two errors he had observed in our pronunciation, but he did not correct any errors. He listened for the chief part of the time with his thin wizened old face buried in his pocket-handkerchief, and hardly looked up till Frances finished reading the last sentence of the tale. Then with his elbows on the table, and his face, still wet with tears, between his hands, he sat for a few more minutes, looking from one to the other of us, in an embarrassing silence.

"Ah," he said at last, "what a beautiful time youth is, what beautiful thoughts come to us in our youth. You are happy, my friends, to be young and to have such good hearts, that the old and unfortunate can accept kindnesses from you without too much suffering." I don't think we understood the meaning of his words so well then as I do now, but we knew

he meant to thank us, and we were well pleased with ourselves. Under Stephanie's good management, the acting dresses looked handsome and fresh all through the winter, and through a long cold spring, and at the end of May we had another fête for our mother's birthday when eight shepherdesses dressed, not appropriately, but prettily, in white frocks, shady hats, and bright scarfs and ribbons, danced a rural dance on the lawn before our house, and sang a welcome to spring taken from *L'Ami des Enfants*. M. de Raubaudet was quite in his element on this occasion, and played the music for the song and dance on a little old violin he had brought from France with him, and which had figured in many a village fête long ago.'

'And did you make the French girls' dresses till they grew up?'

'They ceased to need help from us long before that time arrived. The cold winter I have spoken about which set in so early and lasted so long was the winter of the Russian campaign. The summer of the following year saw Louis XVIII. enter Paris, and Monsieur le Marquis de Raubaudet was recalled from exile by his royal master, and reinstated in a portion of his old estates before the monarchy had been re-established many months. The Mademoiselles de Raubaudet stayed with us while their grandfather went to Paris to settle his affairs, and when he came to fetch them away it was to take them to live at the old chateau we had so often talked about and pictured to ourselves so vividly.'

'Did you ever go and stay with them there?'

'My two elder sisters did; but the opportunity never came to me. I married young and went out to India, and by the time I returned to Europe poor old Monsieur de Raubaudet was dead, and his granddaughters settled in other homes; but (and now I come to the point of my story) all through the rest of our school-girl life we used constantly to receive kind letters and tokens of remembrance from our French friends. The first were sent to us from Paris, and were bought, I do believe, the very day after M. de Raubaudet arrived there. I remember as well as if it were yesterday the delight we felt on receiving a foreign parcel directed to my eldest sister, and of finding, on opening it, four Easter eggs, in ivory and gold, which were discovered each to contain a complete set of working implements. A little gold thimble set in turquoise, gold-handled scissors, ivory *étui* for needles, and gold bodkins. They had gold chains to fasten them to the ornamental outside pockets worn at that time, and I can say that as long as my eyesight served me for needle-work, I have seldom been without mine worn in some fashion or another, and that it has done good service. Here it is, a little dented and tarnished by the long journeys it has undergone in my company, but a pretty toy still.'

'May we open it? Oh, how pretty!' cried Rose, Maggie, and Lucy in a breath.

'There is a motto round the thimble,' said Rose, 'but I can't quite make it out.'

'It is "Français de plus," the motto that Talleyrand suggested for Louis XVIII. to adopt on entering Paris. It was popular for those few months, and I was glad that it dated my thimble, and made it almost an historical curiosity.'

'How you must value it,' said Aunt Rachel.

'So much that I mean to have the pleasure of giving it away while I am alive, instead of letting some one who will never think of me in connection with it inherit it after I am dead. I am determined no one shall have it who cannot use it as diligently and lovingly as I have done, and since my great-nieces show no disposition to qualify themselves for its possession, I have made up my mind to bestow it on the one of you five girls who shall produce the best made suit of clothes for a poor child at the end of these Easter holidays. Aunt Rachel and Mrs. Fanshawe are to pronounce on the merit of your work, for my eyes no longer serve me to detect puckers and uneven stitches, and besides, I am going into the country for Easter, and shall not return till after the garments are given away. That egg shall never be fastened to my chatelaine again. I have taken leave of it, and place it now in Aunt Rachel's hands to be kept for the diligent needle-woman of you who will win it, and give it, I hope, a fresh lease of useful life. I advise her to put it in some safe but conspicuous place, where you can refresh your eyes sometimes by looking at it when an idle fit gets into your fingers.'

'It is to be the reward of neat work, remember,' Aunt Rachel remarked, as she received the egg from Lady Dunallan. 'We consider it a matter of course that you will finish the garments I have cut out for the sake of giving them away. The prize is to be earned by beautiful stitches, and if any of you are ambitious to learn pretty ornamental ones as finishing for the capes and hems, I shall be happy to give lessons in chain stitch and embroidery stitches every evening after tea. I shall put the egg under the glass shade on the top of the little book-case in the drawing-room, where you can all look without touching as much as you like, though I don't recommend frequent visits, as looking and longing won't advance the work.'

'Then let us have one very good look now, Aunt Rachel!' cried Maggie. 'Let us all try the gold thimble on, and see which of us it fits best.'

With more or less silver paper stuffed inside, the thimble could be made to fit all the fingers, including Lily's, and a few stitches were set with it by each worker in succession to prove its quality. All agreed that there was magic in it, and that in spite of a tendency to roll off, it did better work than an ordinary thimble with no story attached to it could be expected to do. Experiments to prove this fact to doubting Aunt Rachel were repeated by one and another till the clock struck nine, and Packer appeared to say that Mrs. Fanshawe's servant had come for Miss Fanshawe, and that Mrs. Ingram wished the young ladies to come to the drawing-room to say 'Good night.' One holiday evening, the one

that was usually most noisy, had passed peaceably at all events. No doors had slammed for two hours, and no one had startled Mrs. Ingram by tumbling down stairs, or making unaccountable clatters overhead in the night nursery. Mrs. Ingram meanwhile had had a short nap after her dinner, and since had been enjoying a quiet talk with the Professor in the dimly-lighted drawing-room. She spoke cheerfully in quite a strong voice when the girls came in to wish her 'Good-night ;' but the Professor would not allow them to enter on the story of the gold thimble. As Rose kissed her mother's thin cheek over and over again she could not help fearing there was a suspicious moisture on it, as if during the quiet talk a few tears had now and then been trickling down. The discovery made her recur to her first thought, that Aunt Rachel and Lady Dunallan had provided quiet employment for them during the holidays chiefly for mamma's sake, and she resolved that as far as lay in her power the scheme should not fail.

(To be continued.)

DISOBEDIENT CECIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'MRS. JERNINGHAM'S JOURNAL.'

CHAPTER XVI.

BUT neither will nor spirit, whether they belonged to Cecil or to anybody else, could prevent Helen being ill. She had caught cold on the previous night, and not being at all strong, was in so wretched a state by the middle of the day, that after having vainly attempted to eat some dinner, and having sat for two hours afterwards shivering over the fire, she was obliged to give up altogether, and go to bed. Cecil was extremely sorry for her, helped her to undress, covered her up warmly in her bed, kissed her, and brought her the *Talisman*.

'There, read that and be happy !' she cried ; 'think yourself fortunate to have a cold, if it brings you into contact with the lion-hearted king, fair, foolish Berengaria, noble Edith, and her true knight Sir Kenneth. O Helen, how much better they all are than any of us ! Those were days to live in. What would not I give to have been a princess in the days of chivalry !'

'Perhaps it might have been pleasant,' replied Helen rather doubtfully from under the coverlet, 'but it would seem very odd ; and I should not like keeping dwarfs.'

'You *needn't* keep dwarfs,' replied her cousin, shortly. 'Of course, that would be optional.'

'And fools ?' urged Helen.

'I *should* rather like keeping fools,' replied Cecil thoughtfully ; 'they almost always say the things one would like to say oneself, only one feels

it would not quite do. I wish Uncle James kept a fool. He would hear some home truths if he did.'

'“I sleep ; wake me not,”' read Helen, turning over the pages of the book. 'That's an odd motto for a knight, is it not? Why should he be so sleepy? or does he mean that he isn't to be called in the morning?'

'And brought his hot water to shave,' laughed Cecil. 'No, it doesn't mean anything so common-place. It's a delightful motto; it's like Colonel Wyndham! I thought so the other day when I was reading it. He is so courteous and kind, and *not* angry; but *if* his wrath were roused! Oh, then what could happen, and what could any one do? It would be terrible! terrible! Now Uncle James is just the reverse; *always* awake, brisk, bustling; and so nobody cares whether he is angry or not.'

'Oh, don't they, though,' sighed Helen; 'I am sure *I* do.'

'Yes, you do in a way; but not in a nice way. You only care because it is worrying, not because it is awful; not as one would *wish* to care, if one has to care at all. Now, if Colonel Wyndham were angry, *what* would one do? It would be too dreadful, and yet all the time one should like him the better for it.'

'I wonder whether he was very angry about Diomed—very angry with her.'

'So do I; so much, that I hardly know what to do about it. The comfort is that it seems hardly possible any one could be really angry with Juliet; and least of all her own colonel. If it was not that I feel and know that so thoroughly, I should be quite unhappy; but I do wish I knew how Diomed was. Helen, I think I must persuade mademoiselle to go out with me. It is not too late; and if we are once outside the walls of this prison, we should be almost sure to hear *something*; don't you think so?'

'Yes, I think you would. I shall be quite comfortable with my book, and I shall be dreadfully interested when you come in to hear what has happened.'

'Things are always happening outside a prison, but nothing ever happens within its walls,' said Cecil, in rather a dreary manner.

The fates appeared to be against Cecil on this particular morning. She found mademoiselle in her room busily engaged in writing a letter. To write a letter was a matter of business in which mademoiselle did not indulge every day, and to her it was a complete matter of business. Her ideas did not appear ever to come as readily in writing as in conversation, and her pen never acted for her, and wrote the words almost before she herself knew what they were going to be; a strange thing to happen when one reflects upon it, although common to the experience of most of us; and if this was the case even when writing her own familiar language, it may readily be supposed what a matter of time and trouble the composition of an English letter would be to her; and that it was an English letter on which she was at present engaged the near neighbour-

hood of dictionary and grammar plainly showed. She flatly declined, when interrupted in her occupation, to accompany Cecil on a walk. She shivered and shrugged her shoulders, elevated her eyebrows, and shivered again.

'Ah, no, no,' she said, 'I am busi. You are mad, and it ish late. You are mad, *chère petite*, and I am busi. It is mad, mad, to wish to leave fire-sides this horeable weathers, with snows on the ground freezing to cold. I cannot; I will not; I am busi. Go, go, you ish mad.'

And not a more satisfactory word could Cecil extract from mademoiselle, who returned, after a little farewell wave of her pen at her, with unabated interest to her employment.

'Very well, mademoiselle. Exercise is necessary to preserve health, and I shall have to go out by myself,' said she, with some defiance of manner.

'Tells me nothings, tells me nothings,' replied her governess. 'There ish the grounds of the pleasure—promenade you in them. Tells me nothings, *chère petite*, and go, go.'

So Cecil went. She put on her warm jacket and hat, thinking that she might at any rate walk in the garden—designated by mademoiselle as 'the grounds of pleasure'—and so relieve her restless spirit by bodily movement and exertion. 'It is just like my life,' she mused discontentedly, as she did so. 'When I want to do anything, I have to content myself with its pale imitation—a wretched dull time between the garden walls alone, instead of a delightful rush into the outer world, where I might hear or see something of Juliet; and everything is miscalled also, just as mademoiselle miscalls that wretched garden the "grounds of pleasure." Pleasure, indeed! Has pleasure ever entered or made even the most distant acquaintance with Fernley manor-house?'

She called to Robert as she went down stairs, and asking him where his uncle and aunt were learned that they had gone out for a drive in the close carriage. She shuddered at the idea of that drive. 'Everything is cold and dull, dull and cold,' she cried to herself as she ran down the hall steps to the terrace walk from which the snow had been swept. 'My garden walk and this carriage drive, which is the most constrained and the most disagreeable I wonder? But *their* spirits are not beating against prison bars and calling out for freedom, so *I* am infinitely the most to be pitied—and yet am I? Which is really the most dreadful state? to be dull and contented, or dull and discontented? Ah, they are worse off than I am. I would not give up my discontent for their content; no, not while the world has a promise or a hope beyond the present. I have still a future, my very dissatisfaction gives me one, while they are self-deprived of theirs by their contentment.'

At that moment, and while she kicked away a lump of snow, with a vehemence, due rather to her own thoughts than to any inconvenience the snow had caused her, she saw two figures walking with rapid steps towards the house and herself. Her heart beat quickly, with an

unreasonable hope for a moment, and then sank down to the very depths of disappointment as she discovered, on a nearer approach, that they were the Miss Lesters. They came up with bright colours and sparkling eyes, warmed by their walk, and looked as satisfied with life and the world as Cecil was the reverse.

‘Mamma sent us to inquire about you,’ Adela said after they had shaken hands; ‘we were so very sorry to hear there had been an accident. We hope nobody was hurt; but you must have been dreadfully frightened.’

‘Thank you, no one was hurt, and I was not the least frightened,’ replied Cecil coldly.

‘No, were you not really?’ Lucy said quite admiringly.

‘I think any sort of carriage accident so very alarming,’ said Adela. ‘I am naturally such a coward. I do my best not to seem frightened, but I never feel brave.’

‘I should despise myself if I felt frightened,’ said Cecil.

Adela coloured with the uncomfortable sensation of being snubbed and repelled, which in Cecil’s presence she always experienced while she tried to ignore it.

‘Your cousin is quite well I hope?’ she asked almost timidly, feeling as if the most common-place word of hers might lead to a rebuke.

‘Yes, quite well,’ was the reply. ‘Oh, no, I beg your pardon; I was not thinking of what I was saying. One never does, does one? answering those polite inquiries that mean nothing. Helen is in bed with a bad cold.’

‘Oh, I am sorry,’ said Lucy; ‘do tell her how sorry I am.’

‘Certainly, if you wish it,’ replied Cecil, with a surprised stare.

‘And I did not mean a polite inquiry that meant nothing,’ said Adela with a little difficulty, but with gentle firmness; ‘from not seeing her I was afraid she might have caught cold, and I really wished to know.’

She coloured a good deal as she managed to say these words, and still more when Cecil only bent her head in acknowledgment of them.

Then Cecil said with formal politeness, ‘I hope Mrs. Lester is quite well?’

‘She is pretty well, but she is anxious at not hearing from my brother.’

‘Oh, indeed.’

‘Yes, the last mail from Australia was lost, the ship was wrecked, and though the passengers were saved the letters were not; and she always gets so anxious when a long time passes without word of or from him. We hope he is on his way home, but this letter would have told us whether he was to start in the next ship.’

Cecil knew all about that wrecked ship and lost letter-bags. Jocelyn

was not a very good correspondent ; he had no one to write to at Fernley Manor but his uncle, and the sister he hardly knew, and several mails having brought no letter from him she had greatly feared one of his precious notes must have been among those that found their resting-place at the bottom of the sea instead of in loving hands ; but not a word of all this did she say to Miss Lester, for she did not wish her to know that her brother was in Australia at all, lest she should connect him with Sir Roland, whose name it had recently been recollected was Vaux, or De Vaux.

‘Yes,’ she said, ‘I remember about the *Ursula*. I thought it such an odd name for a ship, and we were expecting letters by it too.’

‘You have friends in Australia?’

‘Everybody has—don’t you think so? But Miss Lester, will you not come in and warm yourselves before you go home?’

This proposal, rather too long delayed for hospitality, was given languidly and declined with some eagerness. Both girls said they must be returning home, and could not delay doing so longer, and Cecil had actually shaken hands with Lucy, and was just going to do so with Adela, when a sudden thought struck her which brought colour into her cheeks and life into her eyes.

‘I will walk a little way with you if you will allow me,’ she said with a little excitement.

The Miss Lesters were surprised at what appeared a friendly offer rather in contradiction to her general manner, but they agreed with ready civility, and Adela felt pleased at the idea, which she gladly welcomed, that perhaps it was only manner on Cecil’s part. She might be the same to everybody and not feel the special dislike to herself which she was never in her company without feeling she experienced.

They walked quickly down the approach and along the road outside.

‘You are not afraid of being wanted when they don’t know you have come out with us?’ asked Lucy a little doubtfully ; ‘ought we not to have left word at the house?’

“If I am lost, I shall be found,
By little footsteps dropped about,”

quoted Cecil from ‘Dr. Bubble,’ with quite a gay laugh, for her spirits rose joyfully at having escaped from its ‘prison,’ and she felt full of unreasonable vague expectations of what this walk might produce.

‘Was not that great fun?’ said Lucy ; ‘I thought it so extremely amusing.’

‘Yes, it was not the least goody. I hate goody things—don’t you?’ cried Cecil recklessly, and feeling pleasure at being reckless.

‘I don’t know,’ laughed Lucy ; ‘what do you mean by goody?’

‘Don’t you know?’ said Cecil laughing also, but her laugh was a con-

temptuous one ; ' it is a word that can't be defined—it must be understood or *not* understood at once.'

' I think I know what you mean though,' replied Adela, ' you mean things that by way of being good are more solemn than necessary. A garden in which flowers were considered wrong would be a goody garden, not a good one ; as if the world had been made only for use without any beauty in it.'

' O yes, I see,' said Lucy ; ' I never look at a sunset without thinking what a different one it would be if beauty was left out of it.'

' And yet I don't quite think that is what goody means,' said Cecil, beginning to get interested, and forgetting that she had wished to shock the Miss Lesters by her way of talking.

' Perhaps not quite,' said Adela ; ' perhaps it here means, like this—thinking it wrong to laugh at all—instead of only wrong to laugh out of place—say in church.'

' Being over particular in fact,' said Lucy. ' Yes, and in a prim, unpleasant way—is not that it, Miss Vaux ?'

' I don't know," said Cecil, ' perhaps it is—but I hate definitions ; and then you see the thing would differ according to the mind of the person who said it—for instance, what *I* might call goody, *you* might think *good*.'

' But that is the same with most things is it 'not ?' replied Adela, ' so much depends on the way in which we look at it, and on the mind of the person who looks.'

' Would not you have liked one of Mrs. Hannah More's dramas better than " Doctor Bubble ?" ' continued Cecil. ' Would not you have thought it more suitable to the occasion ? more instructive ? edifying I believe is the correct word—would you not have considered it more *edifying* ?'

Adela and Lucy both laughed.

' I thought " Dr. Bubble " extremely amusing, and I was delighted to see how all the children laughed and enjoyed it,' said Adela. ' I did not think about whether it was edifying, and Mrs. More would have been too grave for a Penny Reading—would she not ?'

' Oh, I don't know,' said Cecil, ' I don't pretend to judge—it is a mere matter of taste, I suppose, I was only saying what I imagined you think.'

' Which of the songs did you like best ?' asked Lucy.

' Oh, the one about miracles—it was queer, and made one think of things, which songs don't often do.'

' I liked the faith, hope and charity one best,' said Adela.

' And I the rattling one with the chorus,' laughed Lucy, ' it made me ready to do anything.'

' Yes—only it was nonsense,' remarked Cecil coolly, ' nobody *does* it—nobody gives all that they can—we eat good dinners, and let them have bread and cheese—and we don't give up our silks and ball dresses to help them in any way.'

' Ball dresses !' cried Lucy. ' O yes—Adela—'

‘Hush, hush, Lucy,’ interrupted Adela, quite distressed. ‘Pray don’t—what *are* you thinking of?’

‘I beg your pardon, Adela,’ replied Lucy, abashed. ‘I really quite forgot at the moment that one oughtn’t to tell those sort of things.’

But even as she said the words, Cecil uttered a little cry of delight, and exclaimed ‘Juliet!’

A pretty open carriage, drawn by two spirited dashing ponies, now came in sight, which Mrs. Wyndham was driving with extreme rapidity. As she approached, Cecil thought she had never seen her look so pretty, her dress and hat were so very becoming; her cheeks glowed, and her eyes sparkled with the cold weather and the excitement of driving—while her lips were slightly compressed, and her face wore an expression of fixed attention to her occupation seldom seen in it, but which struck Cecil as particularly charming.

She stopped the ponies so abruptly when she saw Cecil, that the astonished little animals stood up on their hind legs, and pawed the air reproachfully with their fore legs, as if they would say, ‘Why are you so capricious?’

Cecil darted forward, leaving the Miss Lesters on the footpath, while she eagerly bent over and grasped her friend’s hand.

‘O Juliet,’ she cried, ‘is Diomed dead?’

Juliet turned large sorrowful eyes upon her, and merely replied, ‘My colonel has gone away.’

Cecil stood like one thunderstruck. The idea of a quarrel, of his displeasure being terrible, and of his having left the house in consequence, rushed over her with irresistible force, and blanched her cheeks while she opened her mouth to speak, and no words came.

Juliet did not appear to find her emotions at all exaggerated under the circumstances, though, as her next speech showed to Cecil’s intense relief, the circumstances were very different from what she had feared.

‘He had a telegram this morning, and he was obliged to leave me on important business, and I don’t know when he’ll be back. I cried for an hour, then I ate my luncheon, and have come out to refresh myself. What luck it is to have met you, Cecil! Get in, get in, there’s a good child; I won’t upset you; I promise you that. I’m not John.’

Without a thought of the Miss Lesters, her uncle, or anything else, in the supreme pleasure of the moment, Cecil hastily obeyed. Juliet nodded gaily to Adela and Lucy, which recalled their existence to Cecil’s mind, who gave them a parting bow.

‘What a very odd girl she is!’ said Lucy to Adela with rather an aggrieved face as the pony carriage rattled and raced down the road.

‘I think she dislikes me very much, and that makes her seem odd to us,’ replied Adela. ‘I am really sorry for it.’

‘But she can’t,’ said Lucy rather indignantly. ‘Nobody ever did dislike you. I think it is just that somehow or other she is odd. And what a great deal of liberty she has for so young a girl, though Mr. Vaux

has the reputation of being so particular, and hardly letting them do anything.'

'Yes, if she has the liberty and does not take it.'

'Oh, Adela!'

'It is very strange, Lucy. You know how she asked me not to tell that she was out that morning. It gave me quite an uncomfortable feeling the whole time she was with us now, that perhaps her uncle would not have let her go, or that she ought not to have come without his permission; and I was wondering whether she could walk back by herself, and whether she was allowed to do just as she liked, or whether she would not say anything about it.'

'And driving off with Mrs. Wyndham in this way! Do you think perhaps she will tell of that either?'

'I really don't know. I hope she will. I hope I am all wrong about it, and I wish I had not thought of it at all.'

'It was her asking you not to tell of that morning walk; and then it would be very odd if she *was* allowed to do all these things by herself when she is not out of the schoolroom, and has a governess,' said Lucy.

'Here is Mr. Vaux coming along the road. I hope he will not ask us anything. It is very uncomfortable, Lucy, is it not?'

Mr. Vaux met them as they spoke. He had quitted the carriage in order to warm himself by a walk home, leaving his sister to drive.

He shook hands with them in a formal manner, but which for him was a very friendly one.

'I have just been calling on your good mother,' he said, 'and she informed me that you had kindly gone to inquire at my house after my daughter and niece. I am afraid you found my little girl in bed with a severe cold, but her cousin, I am sure, was happy to see you. Did you go in?'

'We found Miss Cecil Vaux walking on the terrace,' replied Adela in rather a constrained voice.

'But she took you into the house, I trust?' said he sharply. 'You went in and rested? I trust Miss Cecil Vaux was not wanting in polite hospitality.'

'Oh, no,' replied Adela eagerly; and fearful of doing mischief by her reticence, she told the truth simply. 'She walked part of the way back with us.'

'Indeed!' said Mr. Vaux, so evidently astonished and displeased that the girls no longer doubted that Cecil took a liberty that was not accorded to her. 'And she returned by herself? That was wrong; that was very wrong. She is perfectly well aware that she is not allowed to walk by herself. I am surprised. I am very much surprised. How long ago is it since she left you?'

'Only a few minutes,' replied Adela looking down and feeling most uncomfortable, uncertain as to what she *ought* to do or say.

‘And she returned home by herself?’ said Mr. Vaux, putting the remark in the form of a question, more from his habit of asking questions than for any other reason; for he had not the least doubt that the answer would be in the affirmative.

Adela was silent, and, quite astonished, he repeated the words, and really as a question this time.

‘She walked home by herself?’

Then Adela, poor reluctant witness, felt herself obliged to speak, and as she did not like her position of being questioned and the truth dragged out piecemeal, a position to which she was not at all accustomed, she told the truth at once. To say only ‘no’ she knew would be useless, as the negative would be at once followed by another question, ‘Who was her companion?’ so she said, without any further hesitation,

‘No, she was not by herself, Mrs. Wyndham was with her.’

She was almost frightened at the effect of her words, and wished she was anywhere but where she was, when Mr. Vaux stopped abruptly, forcing her and Lucy to stand still also, and repeated in a voice of thunder,

‘Mrs. Wyndham!’

‘Perhaps,’ she said apologetically, ‘Miss Vaux remembered you would not wish her to be alone, and so was glad to have a companion.’

‘Mrs. Wyndham!’ repeated Mr. Vaux, recovering himself, but unable wholly to conceal his displeasure, though unwilling to let his relations towards and dislike of Mrs. Wyndham be entirely understood.

‘Miss Vaux did not allow Mrs. Wyndham to accompany her from any wish to please *me*, Miss Lester. I am very much astonished. I have no hesitation in saying that I am very much astonished indeed.’

He raised his hat to the young ladies, for Mr. Vaux never forgot his manners however much astonished he might be, and walked rapidly away.

Adela Lester went straight to her mother when she reached home. She knelt down on the floor by her side, threw her arms round her, and leant her head against her shoulder.

‘O mamma,’ she cried, ‘it is sometimes very difficult to know what is right and what is wrong.’

‘It is, darling. And yet I think we can always find out, can’t we, if we take the right way?’

‘Can we? are you sure we can? is it always certain? I have had such a puzzle this morning. What I believe was right was not only disagreeable, but it *seemed* wrong.’

‘Tell me all about it, Adela, and we will see if there is not a clue to the puzzle.’

‘Mamma, do you really think Cecil Vaux dislikes me?’

‘My dear Adela, such an idea never crossed my mind for a moment. What can make you suppose that I think it?’

‘No, it is not that I suppose you think it, but I am almost sure it is

the case, and I wanted your opinion about it and to tell you. You know how she wanted me not to mention I had met her out before breakfast, and how she would not shake hands with me. Well, mamma, ever since her manner has been quite as if she disliked me. At the reading last night I told her about Frank's friend being a Mr. De Vaux and that that was why we called him Sir Roland. I thought she had seemed interested about it the other day, and that she would care to know; but she was almost offended at my speaking to her and could hardly reply, and made me feel as if she had forgotten it all and I was being silly.'

'You did not tell me this before.'

'No, mamma, it seemed foolish, and touchy, and petty to think about it and to consider it worth repeating. But to-day her manner was just the same. We found her in the garden, and she walked back with us, and met Mrs. Wyndham driving, and got in with her and drove off, and then Mr. Vaux met us.'

Here Adela narrated exactly the whole of her conversation with Mr. Vaux.

'Now, I *knew* he would be angry, and I could not *bear* to tell tales of her, especially because she dislikes me; yet it was almost helping to deceive her uncle not to say at once, and in the end I did not tell him she was driving with Mrs. Wyndham, because I am sure that that would have made him so extremely angry.'

'I don't think you did wrong, dear,' was Mrs. Lester's consolatory reply; 'you could not be called upon to bear witness against another, unless there was a strong reason for it or you had to say what was not true, or even to equivocate in the slightest degree. I don't see that you did either here. You said at once that she did not return alone, and so it rested entirely with Mr. Vaux to learn all about it. He will conclude also that she was driving, for Mrs. Wyndham is a very unlikely person to be walking so far from her home late on a winter afternoon. Miss Vaux is not timid, and does not give me the idea of being untruthful, therefore, if her uncle questions her she will, I should hope, tell him she was driving. Had it seemed likely that your silence would have led her to tell a falsehood I think you should have spoken out, as it would then have been a greater unkindness to her to hold your tongue.'

'I am very glad indeed, mamma, you don't think I have done wrong.'

'There is only one thing, Adela, and that is, that you ought to try not to let a personal feeling influence you in a matter like this. That is where your danger lay. If to speak or not to speak was a question of right or wrong, the fact as to whether Cecil Vaux liked or disliked you ought to have made no difference whatever in your conduct.'

'Yes, mamma, and it was that which I could not help thinking of

all the time. It kept coming always prominently forward in my mind, and so I got bewildered, and hardly knew what I ought or ought not to do.'

'Yes, love, I think that was the only reason why you were puzzled. It would all have been easy but for that. You could have seen just when charity must have stopped for fear of leading to untruthfulness. What you should have said to yourself at the moment was that the right and wrong was not one bit altered by the fact that Miss Vaux disliked you.'

'Thank you so much, mamma ; you have made it quite clear to me now, and I see how it was, and it is very satisfactory. It was not anything wrong in the right, but something wrong in me that made the difficulty. I knew, of course, there could not be really any doubt as to what was right, but I did not see clearly ; everything seemed right and everything seemed wrong, and no one thing better than the another, and it was all simply because I was allowing a personal motive to influence me in reality when I thought I was only thinking about right and wrong. It is very satisfactory how everything always does come out clear.'

'Yes, darling, if we take the right course when we are puzzled. There is only one way, you know, of really settling any question.'

'I am very sorry I met Miss Vaux that morning, and that she dislikes me in consequence, for there is something about her, through it all, that always attracts me. Even when I don't approve of her I can't help feeling that I could like her very much if she would only let me.'

'Perhaps it is just as well then, Adela, for I am sorry to say that I am afraid there is a *great* deal in Cecil Vaux not to be approved or liked ; and though I do honestly think that if you were intimate you would be much more likely to do her good than she would be to do you harm, still I confess I should shrink a little from trying the experiment.'

'I suppose it is better to know only good people till one is quite grown up and strong-minded,' said Adela with a little sigh.

Mrs. Lester laughed, but answered gravely, 'Of course we ought never to forget Who taught us the daily prayer of "Lead us not into temptation," and, therefore, to avoid whatever is a temptation. I should not, however, be much afraid for you, love, in that sort of thing ; your particular temptations, perhaps, do not lie in that direction.'

'I like Miss Helen Vaux, mamma, too, and I don't think she is—that she has—I mean I think if she had anyone to teach her and talk to that she would be very good.'

'She has a sweet little face and very nice manners.'

'She caught cold last night and is in bed. I should like to go and see her and lend her the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, which she said she wanted to read very much, if you think I might.'

‘I can’t see why you should not. Mr. Vaux appears to be anxious that you and Lucy should see as much as you can of his girls: He was calling here just now. It was an unlucky business letting the Miss Vauxs go home with Mrs. Wyndham. Did you not think they were very intimate?’

‘Certainly, mamma; surely they are. They think there is nobody like Mrs. Wyndham, and they seemed as intimate as possible at the meeting. I should have fancied, from their ways, they had known each other before Mrs. Wyndham’s marriage. I am sure I heard them calling each other by their Christian names.’

‘Well, it is very odd, Adela, and what you tell me makes it seem more extraordinary still; but the fact is Mr. Vaux does not like Mrs. Wyndham, and has never called on her husband, and he does not appear to be aware that there is any acquaintance between them at all. He was very much annoyed, and no wonder, as that is the case, at their having gone home with her last night. I think he was inclined to blame me for it till I explained just how it happened, and then he acquitted me. He is a tiresome man, which I suppose he can’t help, but I think he is just and has good principles.’

‘He is the landlord who was so hard to the poor Dales.’

‘Yes, but numbers of men would have been the same. I mean good men. His justice and high principles really showed themselves there, though he wanted something else to temper them.’

‘It must be a difficult thing to be really a delightful man, mamma, much more so than a woman. Men have so much to do and so much to decide about, and women have only little easy things, and most of their duties are pleasant.’

‘I don’t know about that, Adela,’ replied Mrs. Lester laughing; ‘wait till you are a woman before you decide the question.’

Adela laughed too.

‘I shall be a woman very soon shall I not?’ she said; ‘but I don’t see that that will make much difference. My duties will be just the same; and I am sure they are very easy and pleasant ones.’

‘If you marry they will not be the same.’

‘Yes, if I marry,’ laughed Adela, ‘only then they will be easier and pleasanter I suppose. People don’t marry from a sense of duty—it never can be a *duty* to marry. It is a thing that is really done for happiness; and that there is no harm in doing for happiness alone if everything else about it is right.’

‘A happy marriage is the happiest state of life into which God can call you, and an unhappy one is the most miserable,’ replied Mrs. Lester.

‘Well, I never feel as if I should marry at all,’ said Adela thoughtfully. ‘I *can’t* understand how girls do it. How *can* I love any one better than you and papa and Lucy? and how *can* I wish to leave you all and live instead with somebody whom in comparison I hardly know?’

Somebody whom I have not known and loved all my life as I have you? If I did not see that girls do it every day I should say it was the most unnatural thing in the world.'

'And yet it is the most natural,' said Mrs. Lester with a smile and a sigh; 'it is human nature as God has made it; and the deep, pure love called forth by marriage is one of His most precious gifts.'

'I suppose,' said Adela, 'that affection of all kinds—the love we feel for anything, from those without whom we could not be happy at all, down to a kitten or a bird—is like what we were talking of to-day with Miss Vaux—beauty.'

She looked inquiringly at her mother as she spoke, who, not quite understanding, smiled and answered, 'Yes—in what way, dear?'

'Why, we could live with people and not love them—just as the sun could set without exquisite colours, or ~~we~~ could grow ripe without being *flavoured* so pretty when it does so, or having had charming blue flowers first. Love among people is just like beauty in nature, is it not, mamma? and shows how in making the world God intended a great deal more than mere use?'

'Nobody can doubt that, dear, who lives in the country and has eyes and ears,' replied Mrs. Lester smiling; 'why need the song of the birds be so delicious any more than the colours of the trees and flowers?'

'Think what it would be if the world were ugly,' said Adela with almost a little shudder at the idea; 'and another thing I have often thought of too, and that is our delight in music, and painting, and poetry; they all give us a keener and higher pleasure than commonplace things that are not beautiful, however useful they may be.'

'Yes, everything is good that God made; and all the things that *seem* useless and only beautiful to us may be as useful in His eyes as what we in our shortsighted ignorance *call* the useful. One thing only remains sure—that we are bound to cultivate all the gifts He has given us as fully as we can. Our intellect and our imagination ought all to be made the most of as God's gifts—all hallowed to Him, and none despised by us. There is no folly seems to me greater than that which leads human intellect to despise sometimes what is in reality a gift of God.'

'Yes, and by hallowing them to Him——' began Adela, and paused.

'We bring them under the law of obedience,' said her mother; 'and without due attendance to that law nothing human, and no human use of the heavenly, can be *safe*.'

'That law of obedience is such a comfort always,' answered Adela. 'I sometimes wonder what we should do without it. It makes everything clear and simple, and shows us so distinctly how far we may go and no farther.'

At that moment Lucy came quietly into the room.

'Mamma,' she said, 'I was looking in the paper at that account of the

Botanic fête you said I might read, and just under it my eye fell on a notice that some of the letters had been saved from that Australian ship; one bagful has been saved and is to be forwarded to England immediately, so that really and truly we may hear from Frank yet.'

The colour mounted into Mrs. Lester's cheeks and then faded away again, leaving her paler than she was before.

'That is good news—that may be very good news, Lucy dear,' she said; 'it would be a rare blessing to get a letter after one has given up all expectation and even hope of it.'

'You seem to think more of this letter than of any of the others,' said Lucy.

'I suppose because it has been kept from me,' replied her mother smiling; 'we often value things more because of the difficulty in getting them. But I *have* a strange feeling as if there *was* something more than usual, a feeling which it would be excessively foolish to yield to for an instant, but which comes back on the first impulse whenever the subject is brought before me, and which I have to reason myself out of again and again.'

'How very odd,' said Lucy. 'I suppose it is the same sort of eerie sensation that a dream leaves behind it sometimes—an impression produced on the mind which one can't erase, though one need not attend to it.'

'It would be a horrible thing to have a dream come true. Would it not?' said Adela.

'Not unless it were a horrible dream,' replied Lucy. 'It would be nice enough to have a nice dream come true.'

'We had an Irish servant once who was always dreaming, and quite believed in dreams,' said Mrs. Lester. 'I remember when I was a girl I dreamt that I saw a little white mouse with a red morocco collar round its neck run out from under the kitchen dresser and come up to me. I told her this, and she looked uncommonly pleased, and smiled to herself, but would explain nothing. Not long afterwards I became engaged to your father, and when I told her that I was going to be married, she looked very wise and said, "Shure as if I didn't know that, miss, dear. Have ye forgotten the dhrame ye had, and the white mouse wid the red collar round its neck?" That mouse was Mr. Lester!'

Both girls laughed heartily at this, and declared they hardly knew any one who resembled a white mouse less than their father.

(To be continued)

A WINTER STORY.

XI.

‘He has his winter, too, of pale misfeature,
Or else he would forego his mortal nature.’

Keats.

JACK DYKES'S capture caused not a little sensation in the neighbourhood. Plenty of small offences were laid at the door of the Ponds people, and sometimes, though not very often, these were brought home to the culprits, and punished. It was believed, moreover, and not without good grounds, that the broom-makers up to a late time had indulged in large smuggling ventures, for the coast was not actually above five-and-twenty miles distant; and they ran their carts up with equal daring and success, finding excellent hiding-ground about the Ponds themselves, or in the wild country in the midst of which the colony was isolated. But it was many years since anything so serious as horse-stealing had been proved against one of their number, and rumour said that there was much excitement stirring among the broom-makers, and that additional precautions were taken by the police in consequence. Had it not been for the fall of snow, heavier than had been known in the country for many a winter past, Jack Dykes might have taken the chestnut well out of reach before a hue and cry was after him; but the snow laid an unexpected obstacle in the way, since there was no urging the mare through the deep drifts; and though he had friends at Barworth, they were not disposed to endanger their own safety by very warm offers of service. Moreover, unfortunately for Jack, there was a new superintendent at Barworth, who, being an enthusiast in his profession, was on the look-out for opportunities of proving his zeal, and not grateful to the lot which had placed him among a moderately prudent and peaceable population. To him—such are the varied points of view from which we regard our neighbours' actions—Jack's iniquity appeared in the light of a merciful dispensation; and the snow and the superintendent forming so strong a combination, Jack fell a victim, although not without a struggle, which was likely to tell against him at the trial.

All this—put into popular form—Ronald heard discussed between Rachel, Ben, and a policeman, who had come in to announce an examination before the magistrates on the following day, and to beat up the witnesses. Ben was to go, and Ronald, as it was considered important to identify Jack and the man who had been lounging about the yard, probably with a view of ascertaining the position of the stables, and perhaps taking an impression of the lock. The owner of the horse was also wanted, and opinions varied as to whether Mr. Oldfield would attend or not.

‘I'll bet what ye please ye don't move th' master,’ said Ben, stirred to an unusual demonstration by his excitement.

‘He can’t go against the law,’ said the policeman, shaking his head judicially.

Rachel, who was offended at her presence not being required, said contemptuously, ‘Law ! I don’t think much of yer law, if it ain’t enough to catch a man wi’ the meat in his mouth, but what ye must bring a lot of folk to swear they saw’t on his knife an’ fork. If I were master I wouldn’t be made a fool on.’

There was always sufficient sharpness in her remarks to give her male hearers an uncomfortable doubt of their own powers of retort.

‘You’ll bring the boy, then, Mr. Cæsar,’ said the policeman, waiving the subject with a dignified reticence.

‘Bless the man,’ returned Rachel ; ‘I’ll pack ’em off, an’ throw long Peter into the bargain, if ye’d be glad of another o’ the same sort.’

‘And you’ll tell Mr. Oldfield ?’

‘Niver fear ; I’ll tell ’un.’

Nevertheless, she was not without misgivings. Mr. Oldfield had allowed his habits of seclusion to increase upon him so absorbingly, that she doubted his being drawn from them even for a day ; and she felt it was more than probable, judging from past experience, that the horse having been recovered, he would refuse to prosecute, and would let the matter drop. So little, moreover, do we understand the bearing of events upon differently constituted minds, that Rachel lamented the following of this upon that other disturbance caused by Hester. It seemed to her that Mr. Oldfield was more gloomy, more ill at ease, and more reserved than she had yet seen him ; nor, indeed, was she far wrong in her opinion. And yet it may be doubted whether this sudden intensifying of emotions were not a healthier sign than the more stagnant course they had run with him of late. Hitherto, he had acted as if the only reparation he could make to those whom he had injured were to bury himself in a solitude which resembled a solitary confinement : now his prominent feeling was that of anger, because these very persons had invaded his solitude. Nothing could show more forcibly the vigour with which a morbid idea, nourished in spite of reason, will grow into unmitigated selfishness. And it is well for us when such an idea is invaded, before it has time to strangle our very souls.

That it was not yet too late was proved by the very disturbance which Rachel dreaded. Mr. Oldfield’s irritation against others was mixed, as has been hinted, with a conviction of his own weakness that angered him no less. Strength may be lost unconsciously while we permit no demand to be made upon it ; but when the demand comes, there must be a thrill of pain to find ourselves helpless. Do we not know it ? Alas ! there are other gifts, which we cast away, and yet dream they will be ours when we cry out for them. Poor Philip had received a severe shock in the discovery of his own feebleness. His love for Hester appeared to be dead, yet her coming was like an upheaving of the ground under his feet ; the tenderness and pity in her eyes hurt him with

a strange but actual pain. He turned restlessly away from it. He even tried in his distress to call up the dead reproachful face which had haunted him for years—a remembrance that could not be forgotten; a ghost never to be laid.⁹ It had vanished. Hester's living eyes looked at him instead, with reproach, too, in them; but reproach that had in it a call, a demand, instead of that dumb pressure which had seemed to weigh upon his heart like lead. It sounds as if there must have been relief; but as yet, at least, it was only an added pain.

Goaded, however, by this sting to some sort of action, were it only to prove to himself, or to her, that the power of action yet remained, the demand upon his energy, caused by Jack Dykes's theft, was by no means unwelcome to him. It was easier for him to exert himself in a matter removed from the monotony of farm life, the buying and selling and simple routine of which presented no forces sufficient to rouse him. He felt, too, at this time—strangely enough, considering the long years during which he had been content to nurse one train of thought—an impatience of the old subject, and a desire to shake it from him.

Contrary, therefore, to Rachel's expectations, Mr. Oldfield received his summons to the examination before the magistrates without expressing any disapproval; and, indeed, gave orders for the tax-cart to be ready at a certain hour, in order to take Ronald and himself to the town, while Ben walked. The day, when it came, was one that might have daunted travellers, for the incessant rain and quick melting of the snow had flooded the little river, and turned the country into a lake district. Ben, in his sage green smock and black velveteen trousers, started early, and Rachel was left undisturbed to her most congenial occupation, the harrying of the unfortunate Peter, whom she sent backwards and forwards to watch that the rising waters did not cover the slip of grass on which the cows had been turned out, and where they stood disconsolately huddling against the hedge.

Ronald went off in high spirits. It was a little curious to notice how much the boy had lost of that shrinking timidity which he showed upon his first arrival at the farm. It would have seemed to a looker on more probable that it would have increased upon him, taking into consideration the circumstances in which he was placed, Rachel's incessant ratings, and the presence of his uncle to strengthen any hereditary sensitiveness. But nature is kind to children, and all these influences were, doubtless, more than counteracted by a certain new liberty, a hardier out-of-door life, and freer communion with earth and sky, while the delicate instincts already awake within him found healthy food in interest for his uncle. Mr. Oldfield had shown scarcely a sign of what could be called affection. He was never unkind, it is true, but he was indifferent, and indifference is a stony soil for love to find its root in. And yet the boy must have loved him, for he worked at his lessons with a great desire to please his teacher; he liked to feel that he belonged to him, and he now settled himself in the cart with keen satisfaction that a drive of some miles lay

before them. His pleasure was so vividly expressed in his face that Mr. Oldfield, catching sight of it, looked again with a little wonder, as at some brightness at once unexpected and unexplained.

It did not, however, re-act upon himself. Although he had forced himself to the point, and was conscious of a sort of desire for Jack Dykes's punishment which was new-born in him, together with other feelings, the act of stepping forth into the world—so soon removed from and forgetting us—was distasteful to him in the extreme ; so that more than once, during the drive, he was urged by an almost irresistible impulse to turn and go back to the farm, which lay behind him like a haven, if not of rest, at least of solitude. But some touch of shame that Ronald should witness his wavering purpose withheld him. He drove silently on across the great drear commons, which looked more vast and desolate than ever in the dull grey enfolding them. When they reached the lower lying lands near Heatherham, the waters were out so extensively that more than once the wheels splashed through turbid streams flowing sullenly across the road ; the hop-fields were brown and empty, the poles stacked against each other at dreary intervals gave no promise of the clustering grace and green luxuriance of summer ; the smoke lay in heavy coils about the old red houses. Ronald had not been to Heatherham since the day on which he arrived at the farm, and he looked round him eagerly. There was a little crowd by the Town Hall, where the magistrates were sitting, among the number certain rough men and women showed that the broom-makers were mustering about their friend, and, as Mr. Oldfield drove up, one or two muttered curses found their way to his ear.

So far, there had been a trouble of indecision on his face, as if he might at any moment relinquish the course he was pursuing, or at least welcome any release from it ; but the sound of these half-intelligible whispers brought about an utter change of expression. He gathered himself together, flung the reins to Ben, who was waiting among the people, and, as he jumped out, eyed the crowd with a look that was more defiant than resolute. It was no less strange than painful to remark the darkening of the delicate features, and the immediate and sympathetic effect produced upon them by that little evidence of hostility. Yet the trouble still underlying the look gave more the impression of disdain on the part of a criminal than the calm determination of a man to uphold his rights. And as another strange trifle it might have been noted that at the moment when he was elbowing his way through the people with this forbidding expression strongly marked upon his face, a little child stretched itself from its mother's arms, and crowed and laughed to attract his attention.

The magistrates were both unknown to him, but as he entered, they either looked, or he imagined that they looked, at him with curiosity, and he shrank at once out of the mask of stern purpose he had assumed towards the crowd outside. The questions put to him he answered in the

fewest possible words, and in an apathetic manner, contrasting vividly with Ronald's eagerness. It was noticed by one of the magistrates that there was more of hesitation in his manner and replies after Mr Claughton had come in to see how matters were going with Jack Dykes, and that he showed a greater reluctance to accept the fellowship which the gentlemen were desirous of testifying, with an instinctive recognition of his position as one of themselves. As for Jack Dykes, there was a simplicity and directness about the proofs of his guilt which prevented any possibility of complication in the affair. He was committed for trial, and sent off to prison without delay, and the crowd dispersed quietly as soon as the business was thus settled. Mr. Claughton came up to Philip before the latter had time to quit the room.

'I am afraid you have a bad set of neighbours at the Ponds, Mr. Oldfield,' he said, 'and I shall be very much obliged to you if you, with your longer knowledge of the place, can suggest any method of Christianizing them.'

The appeal, which Philip did not expect, took him by surprise. He hesitated and flushed, and threw an almost imploring glance at Mr. Claughton. Indeed it was manifest that this outcoming of his into the world had shaken the stillness which, at all events, appeared like composure, and there was nervous agitation in every movement of his thin hands. Yet, he answered the clergyman courteously, although without warmth.

'Probably by this time your knowledge is at least as extensive as mine. I am afraid I am too ill acquainted with my neighbours to form any plan for their reformation.'

'I believe in nothing short of a good fire that would burn the rascals out of house and home,' said old Mr. More, one of the magistrates, rubbing his hands.

'The worst of the business is the demoralising effect upon the young fellows for miles round,' said Mr. Claughton. Both gentlemen looked at Philip, but he stood silent, as if having no share in the conversation.

'Have you suffered from their pilfering before this?' asked Mr. More, addressing him directly again.

'Things have been lost from the farm,' he said laconically. 'Come, Ronald, I am going.'

'Ronald has made friends with my children,' said Mr. Claughton in his pleasant kindly voice, 'and my wife says that is as it should be. She is hoping that you, too, will soon find your way to the parsonage; it will give her real pleasure, and she is so much of an invalid that I suppose we have all grown to consider that an irresistible plea.'

He said it smiling, but there was something of sadness behind the smile. Mr. More was not an observant man, yet even to him there became apparent at this moment in Philip's face a look like that of a hunted creature, which jarred upon his English love for straightforward sequences. Nothing offends some people more than a disturbance for which they cannot satisfactorily account, and the old gentleman turned away impatiently before Philip began to answer in hurried tones,—

‘I am grieved that Mrs. Claughton should be ill, but she—you all must be conscious that there is a barrier between us which it would be impossible to remove. I do not ask to remove it. To do so would be as full of agony to me as to them. I would spare them the sight of anything which, however tender the kindness that prompts their wish, must recall a past full of misery. I only ask the same mercy for myself. Do not let them think it a blessing to drag back the memories from which I am for ever seeking an escape. Do not let them punish me more deeply by re-opening old wounds.’

He spoke eagerly, passionately, fearfully, yet in an undertone which only Mr. Claughton could catch. A faint and pallid ray of sunshine, struggling through the clouds and the window, struck across his forehead and made it look more white and more transparent than ever. The blue veins were standing out, and it was like the face of a child without the fearlessness and absence of self-consciousness which you notice in a child. It seemed to have lost the power of resistance, which is at least one sign of strength, and as he shrank before Mr. Claughton’s quiet look, there might have been a dread present in his mind lest, in spite of himself, he should be forced to yield. Perhaps it was this foreboding which led him to walk quickly across the room, and for the first time voluntarily address Mr. More.

‘There is nothing further to detain us, I believe?’ he said.

‘Nothing, nothing at all,’ replied the old gentleman coolly. ‘You will have due notice of further proceedings. Good afternoon, Mr. Oldfield.’ And then his hospitality getting the better of his antipathy, he added, more warmly, ‘If you should be passing our place any day about luncheon time, look in. Mrs. More will be very glad to see you, and you can bring the youngster here. I’ve a grandson of my own about his age.’

Philip only bowed in answer, and went hurriedly away, without glancing again at Mr. Claughton, who stood where he had left him. Philip’s words, poured forth in an appeal so passionate and so intense, could not fail of producing an effect; an effect, too, which it was not easy to shake off. Try as you would, let common-sense tell you that the man had nursed a morbid idea until he had become its slave, that it was causing him acute misery, imperilling his reason, and that those who best loved him were bound to attempt a rescue, even against his will; it was yet impossible not to be at least touched and moved by the outpouring of these reticent years. And every now and then one who was watching would be suddenly touched to notice amid the sadness of the face another expression flit across it so transient and fleeting that it was lost in a moment, yet so unlike that which now predominated, that you were at once conscious it could not have grown out of the present, and could only be an instantaneous reflection of an old past. Mr. Claughton had once caught this look, and it moved him greatly. He began to have less hope in their cause. There are some obstacles which seem as if they must melt away before friendship and kindness and good faith. Knowing our

weapons, we do not believe they can fail. But, alas! even these are powerless sometimes—powerless, at least, to do the work as we had resolved that we would have it done.

‘Don’t think much of your friend, Claughton,’ said old Mr. More, coming up, and thrusting himself into his great coat. ‘Why can’t he be more pleasant and sociable? I hate a fellow that meets you I don’t know how.’

‘Poor fellow!’ said Mr. Claughton gravely. ‘It is impossible not to pity him with all one’s heart.’

‘Pon my soul, then, I don’t see why. What good does he do himself or any body else, sticking himself down in that hole? I should have been glad of the farm myself. I think Harry would have stayed at home if I could have found him something of that sort to drop into. Pity him! I don’t pity him. A man has got to make the best of what can’t be helped, not to go growling over it. He isn’t doing a bit of good with the farm. Hang it all, no, I don’t pity him.’

Mr. More gave that final tug to his coat collar which is accompanied by a little rise on the points of the toes, and followed by a shake of the shoulders; deliberately pulled on a pair of knitted mittens, wrapped a woollen scarf round his throat, and nodded a mute good-bye to the clergyman. Mr. Claughton, rousing himself from a brown study, went slowly down the stairs, muddy with the tramp of feet, and stood for a moment at the door of the Town Hall, looking out. The crowd had altogether dispersed, only a few children, whose interest in the minutest details was greedy to insatiability, hung about and watched for any one who might come out of these formidable precincts. The market-place was almost deserted. One or two farmers in shining overcoats had stopped their carts, and were holding conversation; the mud lay thick in the streets, the forlorn little glimmer of sunshine shone feebly upon the wet roofs and pavements. At this instant Mr. Oldfield, who had been to the ‘Golden Fleece’ to fetch the tax-cart, drove slowly down the street with Ronald by his side. The boy, seeing Mr. Claughton’s friendly face, smiled and nodded, and touched his uncle, but Mr. Oldfield drove on without looking to the right or left. Poor Philip! he would have nothing of friendship.

XII.

‘Hold, heart,’ I cried, ‘for trouble sleeps;
I hear no sound of aught that weeps;
I will not look into thy deeps—

I am afraid, I am afraid!’

‘Afraid!’ she said, ‘and yet ’tis true,
That what man dreads he still should view,—
Should do the thing he fears to do,

And storm the ghosts in ambuscade.’—JEAN INGELow.

WHEN Mr. Oldfield and Ronald reached the farm again, they found Rachel in wrath so exciting as to overcome her habitual quietude before

her master. It appeared that, trusting perhaps to the absence of the men, some of the women from the Ponds had paid the farm a visit, in which they alternately brought threats and entreaties to bear. Rachel was triumphant in her assurance that she and Long Peter had been too many for them ; and, indeed, another labourer was at work not far off, who might have come to the rescue in case of need. At all events, their language had changed into an appeal to Mr. Oldfield not to be hard upon the lad, in consideration of which it appeared that they were ready to engage that the farm should enjoy immunity from those vexatious little losses which were so common in the neighbourhood of the Ponds. And they were exceedingly desirous that Mr. Oldfield should have an interview with the old grandmother who had nursed Jack Dykes, and who lay too ill and too near her end to have come herself on this errand. Rachel's indignation at such effrontery it is not difficult to conceive.

As for Mr. Oldfield, he heard the story without any sign of relenting. It is true that matters had gone too far for relenting to be of much use, but he showed no symptom which let Rachel suppose that if he could soften Jack's impending fate he would do so. Ronald, who had been standing by, looked up in his uncle's face, expecting to see there some of the pity with which his own heart responded to the tale, which, even under Rachel's telling, had a certain pathos. The boy began to feel that the witness he had so eagerly borne was, after all, a persecution. Jack Dykes leading away the chestnut mare was so different a man from Jack Dykes in prison, with an old grandmother breaking her heart over his fate, that his notions of right and wrong seemed to confuse themselves in the comparison. He hated Rachel at this moment, and looked longingly to Mr. Oldfield for sympathy.

But the gentle and almost dreamy indifference which had hitherto characterized Philip was changing in some odd fashion, only to be accounted for by the existence of those inconsistencies of character which suddenly disarrange all our well-balanced conceptions. We put together the pieces of a man's life with as easy a presumption as if we were but children fitting a puzzle, only every now and then here are three-cornered bits which no force will shape into the holes we say should be theirs. A certain hardness that now showed itself in Philip Oldfield was one of those three-cornered bits, for which we cannot attempt to account, and must be content to let it find its place in its own time and fashion. Hester had hoped to have had quite a different influence, desiring to bring kindly and softening recollections to bear upon the old days ; recollections which should, by their sweet and tender touch, heal that other horrible thing that in his diseased memory overspread all the past. Could she now have seen his mind, her disappointment would have been yet more intense. The defiance that just flitted across his face, as he passed through the crowd at the Town Hall, was a new expression, and seemed to show a fresh and not a hopeful phase of feeling, to which belonged the coldness with which he listened to Rachel's story. Without

attempting to analyse what it is impossible not to notice, the question may be thrown out, whether it did not possibly arise from a sudden discontent, not only with himself, but with the world—the circumstances which he believed had made him what he was. For men are always ready to charge their own weakness upon fate. And it is possible that a feeling of rebellion may be one of the first to stir in a mind touched with this dissatisfaction, a conviction of hard usage, and an inclination to deal out hard measure in proportion to that which it believes itself to have received from—fate.

Whether or no there is any truth in this suggestion, Mr. Oldfield showed no sign of pity for Jack Dykes, so that Ronald, who had expected to find it in his face, turned away disappointed, and a little abashed at his own impulse. Rachel questioned him sharply upon the examination, especially as to what Mr. Oldfield had said and done ; but the boy had been, naturally, too closely taken up with the unfamiliar and more exciting features of the scene to pay attention to what seemed to him rather to belong to every-day life at the farm.

After these little episodes, which had followed quickly the one upon the other, this every-day life resumed its monotony with the same undisturbed course as before. Weeks went by ; there was a succession of cold dull days, during which such work as was necessary was plodded through, and Rachel's cough confined her to the house, much against her active will. Ronald thought that his uncle had suddenly grown stricter with his lessons. More were given ; there was a higher standard of excellence set up ; very rarely did any word of praise reward his efforts. The boy grew disheartened, and was glad to get out where Ben and the men were at work, or to start off on long rambles across the common, where he had learnt the bearing of the many sandy tracks, and, with Watch by his side, was never solitary. On stormy days gulls would not unfrequently sweep up from the sea ; and now and then a flock of wild geese would sail over head, craning their long necks. Sometimes he ran down to the parsonage, where he was sure of a welcome, and where he would have gone more often, but that he was not old enough to endure Finie's patronage with equanimity. One February day, when there had been a change in the weather, and gloom had given way to bright sunshine, Ronald, who had escaped earlier than usual from his lessons, perhaps owing to a secret relenting on the part of Mr. Oldfield when he became aware of the boy's wistful glances through the window, rushed suddenly into the yard, where his uncle was inspecting a new plough, and breathless with excitement, cried :

‘ Uncle Philip—the hounds, the hounds ! Come, come ! ’

Long Peter, hearing this, immediately dropped the handle he was holding, and strode into the road ; and Mr. Oldfield, perhaps moved by some old instinct of his youth, suffered himself to be drawn after Ronald.

‘ Well, to be sure ! ’ said Rachel, who, from one of the windows with small square panes that overlooked the road, had seen the movement.

without understanding the cause: 'well, to be sure, Mr. Philip is beginning to take notice of him after all. And the boy's got so bold; that's the wonder! I'll make a cake for his supper.'

Rachel's keen face wore its most pleasant smile. She had no jealousy of Ronald; no feeling like that which met her whenever she thought of Hester. She went away to gather together Ronald's school-books, lest any should be missing when he was called to prepare his lessons; and, meanwhile, he was dragging his uncle along the road.

'Where are you taking me, Ronald?' said Mr. Oldfield, suddenly stopping.

'Only to the Big Copse. Oh, do come on! Tom Carter, the miller's boy, told me they were there, and if we just go across the corner of the common, we shall see them easily.'

Mr. Oldfield still hesitated, for of late he had not gone beyond his own gates; but Ronald's eagerness was not without its effect, and as there was no road on that side of the common, they were not likely to fall in with companions.

'I think I see them, don't you?' said the boy stopping. 'No, it was only the light on the beech leaves.'

The sunshine, indeed, was pushing its way everywhere, as if to make up for its long absence. It lay warm all about the world, lighting up the white clouds that sailed slowly down towards a soft greyness of blue. And though it was too early for green shoots to be yet breaking out in the hedges, little dun-coloured catkins shook themselves cheerily, brown olives and russets flashed into brightness, and between the stems and through the tangled undergrowth of the wood the light failed in purple depths. Presently Ronald gave a cry of delight: something was moving, a speck of red came into sight for a moment, there was a little distant yelping in the cover, the boy scrambled upon a gate, and Mr. Oldfield, still wondering at himself, leaned over it by his side.

Nothing can be more exhilarating than such a scene on a fine winter's day: the bright colours, the figures moving in and out among the bare brave trees, the lights and shadows, the curve of tails so cheerily carried, the crack of a whip, the brown leaves changed to gold. Mr. Oldfield was watching with scarcely less of interest than Ronald. A more subtle observer than a boy, to whom all changes—even the strangest of all, the going back to youth—are natural, would have been struck with the alteration, perhaps less of face than of bearing. Certainly his attitude became stronger, and seemed to communicate vigour to his limbs. In fact, the cheerful brightness of the scene was like a wholesome tonic in the midst of his unnatural life of repression, and perhaps in proportion to its novelty was the effect produced upon him.

The draw having been unsuccessful by the time they reached the limits of the wood, the riders turned off at right angles to skirt another side, and Mr. Oldfield easily suffered himself to be led by Ronald along the outside of the hedge. Once attracted, there seemed to be a fascination in the

scene to which he yielded himself freely : nor is it unlikely that the boy's anxiety that he should share his delight gave him a certain pleasure, and added a force to this strange renewal of a youth which he had believed to be long ago dead and buried.

'Tom Carter says the fox almost always comes this way, except sometimes when he cuts across Brockerton Bottom,' said Ronald, proud of his information. 'I hope he won't go there this time.'

It seemed as if the fox were rather bent upon falsifying Tom Carter's predictions altogether, by remaining safely in his earth this day ; but this was all the better for the lookers-on, who would have been left in the lurch if any real business had begun. As it was, in a road that ran through the wood quite a little throng was collecting ; there were pony carriages scrambling into impossible places, rosy-faced girls who had walked up from the nearest houses, village children, a surly old farmer proclaiming some grievance, and a couple of gamekeepers ; and except the latter, they were all well enough satisfied to catch glimpses of scarlet now and then coming out of the shadows, and to feel a pleasant excitement as to whether a fox would suddenly break away near them, or cross the road by the higher gap. The picture was as cheerful as possible. There was not much green, but a brightness of browns, of warm soft colours that readily light into beauty. A scent of gorse just touched the air, and overhead the larks were singing with a sweet clear delight. Then all the figures vanished out of the wood, or rode down its blue depths ; some men who had come out late cantered after them along mossy rides, the boys grew impatient, and were never tired of asking questions or proposing means for recovering their lost interest. Hester and the children, with a young brother of Mr. Claughton's, were among the rest, and Finie expatiated somewhat grandly upon her views of the scene, evidently, however, with no little relief that the hounds were out of sight.

'I think it would be very nice to go away along the woad, Aunt Hester,' she announced, 'cause of Bwamble. If the dogs come back here he will be hurted. And me and Tid like the common.'

Hester went, smiling, understanding the object of this diplomacy, and not sorry to leave young Fred Claughton at liberty to indulge his excitement unfettered by politeness. She, too, was glad to be on the common, where the sun lay warmly, and the beautiful blue folds of distance stretched themselves in a soft haze.

'If the fox had comed out, I think Tid would have runned away,' said Finie reflectively. 'And Bwamble——'

'And Finie,' said Hester, shaking her head.

Somehow, although the Big Copse still lay to their right, they had forgotten that chance might bring the hounds in their direction. The people remained in the road, and there was such absolute silence within the wood that it was impossible to believe it was not cleared of hunters. The children played together happily, Bramble walked on with his placid

easy-going air, when suddenly, as they turned a corner of the sandy hedge, out of which projected a big holly, they came upon Mr. Oldfield and Ronald keeping watch at a gap.

Hester believed herself to be prepared for the possibility of such meetings, and, indeed, hoped earnestly for them, since they seemed the only channel left open ; yet it appeared as if they would always disturb and shake her composure in spite of her most strenuous efforts. It hurt her, too—inexpressibly—to notice that Philip drew back with an involuntary movement of avoidance. Poor Hester, who longed only with womanly devotion to lead him out of the darkness he had chosen, and the gloom of an unforgotten past, did not expect that the sight of her should deepen the darkness. She had fancied that he needed to be assured of their friendship, of their forgiveness ; but Philip's gesture struck her as that of one who himself had to forgive. It was so. If she had been a stranger he might have responded to her effort to bring him back to life, probably would have clung gratefully to the hand held out to help him ; but the morbid feelings he had permitted to get the mastery were too inextricably bound about her, the pain of remembrance she brought was too disagreeable for him to be content to face it bravely. He had, moreover, shut himself too closely into an unwholesome atmosphere of self to comprehend the healing powers of love and sympathy, or even to believe in their existence. He thought of himself as a nightmare in the eyes of those who had loved poor Arthur, while by a not unnatural distortion of sentiment he was angry that he should have become so, and with this conviction of the lovelessness of the world it is not difficult to understand how his faint and feeble love of God, more a thing of habit than of faith, had died with the same shock and left him desolate.

‘We did not expect to find anyone on this side of the wood,’ said Hester, hurriedly, as if some sort of apology for her presence were needed. But, recovering herself, she added, trying to smile, ‘Though I don't know why we thought we should have the common all to ourselves.’

‘Ronald and I are going on,’ said Mr. Oldfield briefly.

‘Do not let us disturb you,’ said Hester, flushing a little at his coldness, which hurt and perplexed her. ‘Come, children, we must hurry home.’

But Tid had scrambled on the hedge beside Ronald, and was holding by the long grass, and calling in ecstasy, while Finie, whom Ronald had neglected, uttered grave rebukes from below. It took Hester more time than she liked to bring Tid down from his eminence in a red-faced condition, between triumph and crying, and by that time sweet womanly kindness had conquered pride.

‘Good-bye, Philip,’ she said frankly, putting out her hand so that he was obliged to take it. ‘It is useless for us to pretend to be strangers. And why should we? Come to the parsonage and see Agnes.’

Mr. Oldfield shook his head, and although it seemed as if a tinge of sadness were added to his vexation, he said almost querulously :

'It is impossible, quite impossible. Between you all and me there is a black shadow, as dark, as stern, as full of menace as ever. My burden is already as heavy as I can bear, and it is not like you, Hester,' he went on, letting the name slip unconsciously, 'to try to add to such a trouble.'

There was so much of weakness in the words and in the tone that a thrill of terror seized Hester. Was it too late? Was his reason shaken by this solitary life of sad retrospection? Was he the prey of monomania? It seemed cruelty to oppose his wish, yet something told her that stupor is too like death, and that cruelty may be the truest mercy. She said softly:

'No misfortune, surely, ought to drive us into such misery as you describe? If Arthur were here to speak——'

She stopped suddenly, terrified at the effect of her words. The name which had not been breathed in his hearing for so many years seemed to give substance to the ghostly fancies haunting his brain. He looked fearfully at her, as if Arthur, and not she, stood before him; and so vivid was the effect of his gaze that even her brave spirit quailed before it, and in the broad, bright sunshine she glanced quickly behind her, and trembled. Philip, who saw the look, after a moment's struggle to recover himself, smiled mournfully.

'Yes,' he said, 'it is as I tell you. He is always between us.'

'And if it were so,' said Hester, after a pause, 'we need not fear him. Arthur can never be otherwise than what he was—my brother and your friend.'

For an instant a startled expression crossed his sad face, but then he again shook his head, and called to Ronald, who was prancing about the common with Tid on his back. He made a gesture of farewell, and went away with quick, irregular steps. Hester looked after him and sighed, a great pity in her heart. She had forgotten herself. If by going away from him she could have brought one faint echo of gladness into this life, of which the music was so piteously jangled, she would have gone thankfully. If another could have taken up her task, she would have left it with a sad joy that there was something still that she could do for him; but there was no one. She could but go on, patiently, gently, knowing Whose hands held the issue, and trying to make His will her own.

THE CHARLEMAGNE ROMANCES.

BOIARDO.

AGRAMANT'S invasion was of a much more organised and formidable character than that of Rodamonte. The long looked-for hero, Ruggiero, had been at length discovered; the ring of Angelica made visible the castle, perched like an eagle's nest on the top of a rock, where Atlante had so

long successfully concealed his charge. By the advice of the crafty Brunel a tournament was carried on at the foot of the mountain, and the fiery youth fretting and chafing like a young war-horse at sight of the mimic battle, at last, by threatening to throw himself down the precipice, extorted from his guardian permission to descend. Brunel, meanwhile, was awaiting him, mounted on the prancing Frontalatte, clad in splendid armour, and bearing Fallerina's beautiful sword, Balisarda.*

Attracted by the beauty of this accoutrement, Ruggiero approached and asked if the horse were for sale. Brunel, though apparently with great reluctance, allowed him to mount, and even to borrow his sword and armour for the occasion of this great joust.

Thus splendidly mounted and equipped, beautiful and strong and daring, the youth, exulting in his new freedom, enters the lists. It soon becomes apparent that the destined hero must be in the field; knight after knight, even Agramant himself goes down before this new lance. All is wonder and curiosity as to who this magnificent counterfeit of the mean person of Brunello may be. Circumstances soon led to his recognition, and he was received and treated by Agramant with great distinction. Some time was now given up to general festivity, to battues of lions, elephants, and other wild-beasts, which put the feats of modern African sportsmen quite into the shade.

The equipment being now in all ways complete, Agramant set sail for Europe. The fleet, as it lay anchored, lined the whole coast 'for a hundred miles' when the army finally landed in Spain in order to effect a junction with Marsiglio. This king, apprised of his opportunity by the treachery of Ganelon, had already laid siege to the castle of Montalbano in the absence of its lord. Whilst thus occupied he received a great accession to his strength in the persons of Rodamonte and Ferraù. These two Pagan champions had met during the former's fruitless search for Rinaldo. They had first quarrelled, then sworn an eternal friendship, and agreed to join Ferraù's relation, Marsiglio, in the siege of Montalbano.

It was on the eve of an engagement between the armies of Charlemagne and Marsiglio that the two absentees Rinaldo and Orlando were discovered during their combat in Ardennes, and hence the warm and unquestioning welcome they received from their sovereign.

The battle which ensued, in which were engaged such knights as Rodamonte, Ferraù, Ruggiero, (on the arrival of Agramant) on the side of the Pagans, and Bradamante, Rinaldo, and Orlando on that of the Christians, must needs be one of the most tremendous engagements ever

* As a reward for his services, Brunello had been made king of Tingitana, and had adopted a device of his own—inventing it himself "as many other people, thinking to ennoble their origin, do now-a-days." Brunello's new device, however, was more to the point than that of many another *parvenu*; he selected a goose, hatching an egg, because, said he, "he found his ancient race had descended from this bird, which was created before any other animal."

recorded, even in romance. The feats of the two Paladins, actuated as they were by their now authorised rivalry for Angelica, exceeded anything which even they had yet achieved. It was now that Orlando performed his far-famed exploit—that of cutting in two so deftly, with Durlindana, the unfortunate Alibante of Toledo, that the latter, not knowing ‘he was a dead man,’ went on fighting, till, raising both hands for a more violent stroke, he suddenly fell asunder at the waist.*

But, in spite of this tremendous specimen of the prowess of Orlando, he felt that his cousin’s quicker arrival to the rescue of the imperilled Charlemagne would tell against his chances of gaining most distinction on this dreadful day. With a mind long weakened by the indulgence of sinful passion, he could not bear up against the thought of seeing Angelica in the possession of another; and, flinging every other consideration to the winds, the unhappy man forsook his post on the battlefield in order himself to aid in the fulfilment of the impious prayer which now fell from his lips.

Thus given up, body and soul, to the powers of evil, insulting heaven with the wicked petition that Charlemagne might be discomfited in order that he should find an opportunity for acquiring more distinction than his cousin, the fallen soul sought the dark shadow of a thicket, where his evil imaginings might be undisturbed even by the roar of the distant battle. Thus standing idle whilst the terrible issue of the day was being decided without him, he was recognised and accosted by Ferrau. This knight, sorely battered by the ‘*miserere*’ which Rinaldo had sung upon his back, had taken off that long-borrowed helmet of Argalia to drink, and, in so doing, had dropped it in the river, where he was now vainly fishing for it with a bough. His inquiry why the Count had left his cousin Rinaldo to win all the laurels of the day, cut like a dagger to the heart of Orlando, and he hastened to return to the field.

There he encountered Ruggiero, and we are told that the battle between this unique pair of the human race would have been more terrible than anything which had yet taken place had not Atlante, alarmed for his pupil, created a delusive appearance of flight amongst the Christian army, which deceived Orlando, and led him to follow, in order to rally his flying countrymen. But, after leading him a long distance, the appearances vanished, and Orlando, finding he had been made the sport of some magical illusion, stopped to consider where he was, and to refresh himself at a cool stream. But this stream was unfortunately the Magic River of Laughter, and Orlando, whose state of mind made him an easy prey to delusion, was drawn in by the enticing sights beneath the water, and made captive.

The Christian army was now wavering on the brink of defeat. To make matters worse, Rinaldo, who had also been engaged with Ruggiero, and had generously dismounted, in order not to put the latter to a disadvantage, observing the disorder of the troops, hastened to remount, in

* This exploit belongs to Berni.

order to rally them. But Baiardo, contrary to his usual docility, would not be caught, and his baffled master followed him in vain till he too was lost to the army. The Christians, seeing most of their generals down, and no longer encouraged by the sight of the two leaders whose presence always meant victory, now fled in complete disarray, pursued by the whole Pagan army.

Ruggiero, after recovering his horse from the flying Turpin, no longer joined in the pursuit, but paused to amuse himself by watching a combat which had been going on for a very long time, without advantage on either side, between Rodamonte and another knight; they fought with such intentness that neither of them had remarked the rout of the Christian army. Ruggiero, therefore, warned them that if either of them belonged to the French army he had better hasten to rejoin his king, who was in sore need of the assistance of all his knights. Upon this, Bradamante, who was Rodamonte's opponent, begged truce in order to follow her master; but Rodamonte would not consent. Ruggiero thereupon courteously offered to undertake her battle. After Bradamante had ridden some distance, she began exceedingly to regret her want of courtesy in not thanking this stranger knight, by whose noble appearance she was much struck, and she determined to return, and so repair her omission. When she arrived, she found Rodamonte rendered perfectly unconscious by a blow from Ruggiero, and the latter patiently waiting till his antagonist should recover his senses. In this interval, Bradamante and Ruggiero entered into conversation, and were mutually charmed with each other. When Rodamonte came to himself even his fierce temper was subdued by the generosity with which he had been treated, and, declaring himself 'vanquished by Ruggiero's courtesy,' he picked up his fallen sword and departed.

Bradamante and Ruggiero now improved their acquaintance, and the latter, upon his companion's removing her helmet, discovered, to his infinite surprise, that the knight whose valour he had admired was a beautiful woman, and found himself struck with a much greater awe of that head, with its golden hair, than he had felt when it wore a helmet. It is unnecessary to say that he immediately returned the affection which Bradamante had already conceived for him. But the lovers were separated but too soon by the attack of a party of Saracens, one of whom wounded Bradamante severely in the head.

Ruggiero seeking her after having dispersed the enemy, was met by two knights, who turned out to be Mandricardo and Gradasso. The latter, angry at not having received Durlindana, had come to demand it in person, whilst Mandricardo, the son of Agrican, King of Tartary, had come to avenge his father's death. Mandricardo, observing that Ruggiero bore the same device as himself, a white eagle,* demanded an explanation; Ruggiero replied that he bore it in right of Hector of Troy, from whom he was lineally descended. Mandricardo could boast of no such

* The device of the Este family.

descent, but he wore the very arms of Hector himself, which he had gained by his valour, and he defied Ruggiero to prove his right to his device in combat.*

Ruggiero had no objection to defend his rights, but observing that his would-be antagonist had no sword, he could not see how it was to be done. 'For,' said he, 'I am not accustomed to fight with fisticuffs.'

Mandricardo replied that he would fight him with a cudgel, for he would never wear sword till he could make his armour complete by winning the very sword of Hector, which was at present in the possession of Orlando. 'For Durlindana is my sword,' said he.

On hearing mention of Durlindana, Gradasso struck in hastily—'Nay, indeed; you deceive yourself, for Durlindana is mine already by right.'

Hereupon arose a quarrel, and Gradasso being too generous to fight with his sword when Mandricardo was swordless, both champions broke down branches from the trees, and belaboured each other with them to their hearts' content. Whilst this mutual cudgelling was going on, our friends Brandimart and Fiordiligi came up, and remained amused spectators of the affray, conversing meanwhile with Ruggiero, whom they had met before in Africa.

On hearing the cause of this laughable conflict, Brandimart suggested to the combatants that in order to obtain Durlindana it might be wiser to seek and fight with Orlando than with each other, adding that he was himself now on his way to free the Count, who was held prisoner by enchantment at the River of Laughter.

Mandricardo and Gradasso, being struck with the force of this reasoning, agreed to suspend their contest, and accompany Brandimart to effect Orlando's escape, so as to be able to settle their demands with him first, and with each other afterwards. The whole party then set off to the Magic River. The knights, each tempted by means of his individual weakness, all fell under the spell except Brandimart, who was himself preserved, and ultimately enabled to rescue all his companions, as well as Orlando himself, by means of certain wreaths, of great virtue against magic, woven for him by the ever-watchful Fiordiligi.

Orlando, once more at liberty—the claims of Gradasso and Mandricardo being temporarily diverted by their having undertaken another adventure—hastened towards Paris, which was now besieged by the united armies of Agramant and Marsiglio, whilst most of the Paladins were prisoners. On seeing the country around devastated, and Paris itself surrounded with hostile armies, Orlando felt the conscience which he had hitherto so ingeniously stifled prick him sharply, and the hasty tears gushed from his eyes. But his heart was still hardened, and instead of taking up towards the Emperor the cry of the prodigal son, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee,' he strove to lull

* It would be too long to relate the adventures in which, by his bravery, Mandricardo obtained the gift of the arms of Hector from the fairy who held them in charge.

the unpleasant reminder afresh, and, worse than all, to lull it and deceive himself by a semblance of religion ; and indeed I fear this is by no means one of the least natural touches in the book.

Gazing mournfully on the city, he gave utterance to a 'fine moral and religious discourse' on the vanity of earthly greatness. 'If any man place his hopes in earthly things,' said he, 'let him look at the example of Charlemagne. He who, victorious and triumphant, made the Pagan tremble, has now lost all—perhaps, even his life.'

But Brandimart urges him to what is far more in consonance with his natural manliness than this hypocritical moralising—decided and effective action on behalf of his friends. And together they rush down upon the Saracens, carry their tents, and free their prisoners, and, thus reinforced, dash on to make a diversion before the city walls.

Rodamonte had mounted a scaling ladder, and had already nearly gained the summit of the wall, when Orlando, arriving, leaped into the *fosse* and cut the ladder, thus bringing down the terrible Saracen, and also great part of a tower at which he clutched in his fall ; but Orlando was himself stunned by one of the falling fragments.

In the midst of the disorder of this action, the poet, according to his usual custom, breaks off suddenly to give an episode, in which Fiordispina, whilst hunting in a wood, came upon Bradamante sleeping, and, the latter's long hair having been cut off in order to allow of the application of a dressing to her wound, took her for a handsome youth, and fell desperately in love with her.

But the interrupted work of Boiardo was never resumed. The French invasion, which, he says, was even then about 'to trouble the fair land of Italy,' supervened, and the untimely death of the poet, so speedily following, left the poem, with all its suggestive incompleteness, to tempt the hand of another workman to take up the snapped threads, and form a finished whole which should cause the names of both authors to be inscribed amongst the list of the great poets of Italy.

HALF A CENTURY AGO.

CHAPTER VIII.

November 1816.—I have a dismal recollection of the winter we passed in Blois, but I am sure that its moral atmosphere was much more wholesome to me than that of Paris. We spent our time quietly and rather rationally than otherwise. Masters were laughably cheap, and I feel the less scruple in using such a disrespectful expression when the recollection of my good old dancing-master, with his thick solid shoes, or as we should call them in Ireland, brogues, his long green coat covered with snuff, his dirty wig and his wee bit fiddle recur to my mind's eye. I have him now before me with his 'pas de zephyr,' and his 'Allons, mademoiselle,

imaginez que vous êtes très coquette, et que je suis un beau jeune homme.'

The Comte d'A—— was governor of this town, and most kind in his attentions to my father; his daughter Rosalba was a lovely girl, but with all my romantic anxiety to find a friend of my own age with a sentimental name and a pretty face, it was impossible to get on with the fair Rosalba; she was so cold and so inanimate; so perfectly civil and so provokingly sensible, so composed in all her movements and above all so perfectly well-dressed, that I found myself always obliged to remember that I was expected to act company in miniature whenever we were together.

January 21.—We went to the cathedral where a funeral service was performed, as at all the principal churches throughout France to perpetuate the remembrance of the dreadful crime which was perpetrated by the French nation on that day:—the murder of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette. How far this measure was well-judged or calculated to soften the hearts of the Singes-Tigres who were accessory to the crime, wiser heads than mine must decide, but I think I may venture to say that it did not produce any good effect upon the rising generation, who considered themselves very ill-used in being obliged to 'expier les péchés de leurs pères,' and as Madame de F—— added, 'Et il y a tant d'années de cela!' The will of the unfortunate king was read by an old priest in a whining nasal voice without the slightest expression of feeling, and although most touching and affecting in itself, did not seem to awaken the slightest interest.

[After Easter Miss S——, the governess, took her departure, and Clara was promoted, as she called it, 'to the wished-for situation of female commander-in-chief.'] At the Hotel du Rhin, at Versailles, (she continues) I passed the happiest time I ever remember to have passed in France.

On the 16th of May we spent the evening at the Comte de Laborthe's, where I met with a little adventure. A circle of young people were engaged playing at forfeits when I entered the room, and my name had not been mentioned when one of the gentlemen present, a young officer of Chasseurs happened to mention that he had been in Portugal. 'Clara y a été aussi,' said Adèle de Laborthe. He then addressed his conversation to me, and told me that he had been at Coimbra. I would have given anything to ask in what year, but the fear of appearing too inquisitive prevented me, and I contented myself with answering 'Et moi aussi.' 'C'est une ville dont je me souviens bien,' answered the Vicomte de Gombault; 'j'y ai passé des moments pénibles. Ces vilains Portugais m'avaient tout volé; j'étais malade, blessé, je n'avais pas un sou; et si le Général Trant, dont j'étais le prisonnier'—I jumped off my chair with the delight of seventeen, and all my Parisian friends present contributed their proportion to the general stock of exclamation. It was a regular scene, a *coup de théâtre*, quite worthy of being acted in a Parisian drawing-room. When I recovered my wits I said as quietly as I could, 'J'espère, monsieur, que vous n'en direz pas du mal, car je suis sa fille.' It was now his turn to be surprised, and he certainly acted his share in the drama uncommonly

well. 'Comment ! C'était le père de mademoiselle qui m'a sauvé la vie ! Oh, si vous m'aviez laissé finir mon histoire ! J'allais vous dire que si le général ne m'avait pas fait soigner—s'il ne nous avait pas protégés tous contre les insultes des Portugais, je n'existerais plus ; et mes compagnons d'infortune reconnaissent bien qu'ils lui doivent la vie.'

The next day M. de Gombault called upon my father, who had some difficulty in recognising in the Vicomte Victor *aux grand moustaches*, and in the fashionable costume of a Parisian *élégant*, the wretched being whom a few years before he had found lying on the ground with literally no covering but a tattered blanket.

Within the course of a few weeks, my father met with two other very flattering testimonies to his humanity and kindness towards the Coimbra prisoners. The Comte de Villenoisy, an officer in the guards, having heard my father's name mentioned as having arrived at Versailles, immediately exclaimed, 'Quel dommage que je n'ai pas une grande fortune pour pouvoir l'offrir à sa fille puisqu'il en a une.' N.B.—He had not waited to ask whether I was old and ugly or otherwise, so that I am not afraid of mentioning this burst of gratitude, particularly as it had no consequences. However, one day a little while afterwards I happened to be at a ball when he, hearing my name and perceiving that I was English exclaimed, 'Trant ! Mademoiselle, seriez-vous par hazard la fille du Général Trant ?' and upon my answering in the affirmative, the poor man thought he never could show me sufficient attention, nor pay me too many flattering compliments. He introduced me to several of his brother guardsmen, as the daughter of his most generous enemy, and spoke of my father's humanity and generosity until he had secured me a succession of the best partners at Versailles during the whole time we remained there. He was a great Royalist and had rendered some important services to the Duchesse d'Angoulême at Bordeaux.

Another officer named M. Teroutier who had been at Coimbra immediately called upon us and regretted that he had no other means of proving his gratitude than by offering to instruct Tom gratis in mathematics. We were the more pleased by these public testimonies of gratitude, because a French account of the Peninsular War had appeared in which my father was charged with inhumanity towards the prisoners taken at Coimbra, which they themselves indignantly refuted.

My father renewed acquaintance with M. Cazotte, the Royal librarian, who had formerly served with the English army in Portugal. He was son to the celebrated Cazotte who was guillotined during the Revolution, and brother to Elizabeth Cazotte whose filial affection has immortalised her in the annals of that dreadful time. Many years after her father's death she married, and died in childbirth. M. Cazotte showed us a Virgil which had been the favourite pocket companion of Louis XVI., and a prayer-book, in which was a MS. prayer by Marie Antoinette for her husband, and several others in Latin and French, by Madame Elizabeth.

October 23.—I accompanied the Lalande family to the Chasse des Princes—an amusing scene, at which were assembled all the noble Royalists or rather Royalist nobles of the neighbourhood. The Duc and Duchesse de Berri, the Comte d'Artois, and the Duc d'Angoulême, were present; but the most interesting person (to me) was the Duchesse d'Angoulême. She conversed for some time with the Lalandes, and on perceiving Monsieur de Villenoisy (my father's friend) among our party, she called to him by name and conversed with him for some time. Indeed, to her praise be it said, she never lost any opportunity of testifying her grateful recollection of his gallant conduct at Bordeaux.

Among my acquaintance at Versailles was the Vicomtesse de Sausillon, formerly the wife of M. de Septeuil—Premier Valet de Chambre to Louis XVI. This lady had been a fellow-prisoner of the unhappy Princesse de Lamballe in the prison of La Force. She was present at the massacre, and was herself on the point of being murdered when her life was saved by the interference of a municipal officer.

At Sir Charles D——'s I met the odiously celebrated Madame Tallien, then Princesse de Chimay. Oh, the look of that woman! I have it even now before my eyes as she sat rouged, coarsely beautiful, magnificently dressed, and smiling among the royalist ladies of Paris. If there were no other objection to a prolonged residence in a foreign country it surely would be one worth consideration that there is no line of demarcation between the respectable and the degraded of womankind!

Denon, the traveller, was a more interesting lion present on this occasion; his countenance was intelligent and care-worn. Among my partners this winter was M. de Colin, a young officer who gave the word of command to shoot poor Marshal Ney. I could not bear him from the moment I found that this had been his duty.

I accompanied my father to a magnificent fancy ball, at Lord Stuart's, where I expected to be very much amused. The Comte d'Artois, the unfortunate Duc de Berri, and his wife; the Duc and Duchesse d'Orleans, the Duke of Wellington, all the French marshals and 'all the world' were present. I danced with the Duc d'Angoulême, who afterwards proved himself so faithful an adherent of the unfortunate Bourbons, and with many other great people who proved to be very stupid partners, and on the whole I was thoroughly disappointed, I returned home in a high fever, with a cold and cough, my head aching and my brain filled with visions of characters and costumes which were anything but pleasing, Turks, knights, virgins of the sun, Swiss peasants and Roman empresses, haunting me like so many nightmares.

1818.—I accompanied my father to Paris for the purpose of calling on the Palmella family, just arrived from England where M. de Palmella was then Portuguese ambassador. He had volunteered to act as aide-de-camp to my father in his campaign upon the Vouga, where he proved himself a most active officer as well as an agreeable and well-informed companion. He married a young girl of twelve years old, as is not uncommon

in Portugal; and at twenty I found her the mother of three children, the eldest of whom was only fourteen years younger than herself. They spent a day with us at Versailles, and we had the pleasure of acting as their cicerones at St. Cloud, Malmaison, Marly and St. Germain, where my father introduced me to the old Chevalier de Fitzjames, the great-great-grandson of James II.

The Palmellas insisted on my spending some days with them at the Hôtel de Castille at Paris, and my father allowed me to accept their kindness. It was indeed a curious change, from my little half-pay bedroom at Versailles to a magnificent suite of rooms given up to my sole use! As the family never met at breakfast before twelve o'clock, I found my mornings very solitary, and I should have been heartily tired of my lonely grandeur if the number of interesting visitors and curious sights had not in some degree comforted me for the loss of a social companion; but these would have proved but poor substitutes if my visit had lasted many days longer. We went to the Montagnes Suisses, and I had many a merry ride with M. de Palmella, little dreaming that my companion, laughing and good-humoured as he was, would one day hold the reins of government in his unhappy country.

I shall end the history of these my days of youthful folly by mentioning that I accompanied my father to a select ball at the Duke of Wellington's, where as usual my anticipations of delight were disappointed. My father introduced me to Lord Burghersh, Lord Fitzroy Somerset, and Colonel Anderson, who supported Sir John Moore in his arms after the battle of Corunna, and received his last sigh.

April 25.—I was awoke this morning by my little maid, Manette, bringing me a note from my father, desiring me to pack up all my treasures and to prepare forthwith for our departure for England! This was indeed an unexpected, and to my foolish little heart a most unwelcome piece of news; however, I could not conceal from myself that the life of excitement and vanity which I had been leading for some months was not calculated to make me either happier or better. If I had been left to follow my own devices at that critical period of my life, I should probably have become by this time a heartless worn-out Parisian would-be fine lady, instead of a happy English wife and mother.

We left Paris on the 1st of May; embarked at Havre, landed at Southampton, and proceeded next day to London.

THOUGHTS.

November 1, 1863.—This is a beautiful and true November; just such a 'calm decay,' just such an 'undressing all so silently,' just such a 'floating of the leaves, each to his parent shade,' as seems characteristic of the month in which the glowing tints of Autumn are passing into the

uncoloured winter. Unspeakably beautiful have been those autumnal tints, deep and rich and brilliant as the hues of memory ; 'glorious as sunset'—yet, like sunset sad ; for there is a mournfulness in the brightest Autumn and in the most gorgeous sunset, unless admiration is vividly mingled with Hope, and we look forward through approaching decay to a fresh spring-tide, and through approaching darkness to a morning without clouds. And thus mournful is the sure though silent advance of old age, rich as it is in love that has borne the test of years, and in the experience which teaches Hope ; rich in children and in children's children, and all those dear treasures which can only come with length of days ; mournful as the fall of the leaf, unless we regard it as the dissolving of this body of humiliation that it may be made like unto the glorious body of our risen Lord. Age, with all its infirmities is simply the approach to death ; any form of disease may be recovered, but age—never ! Gone, and for ever, is written on every power of which age bereaves us ; there is no renovation to be expected ; it is a straightforward progress to the grave ; and as such, all the symptoms of its advance are serious and earnest realities. Fools mock it in others and try to conceal it in themselves ; philosophers regard it as a necessary evil, to be averted as long as possible, and then endured as the enforced cessation of enjoyment ; the Christian, taught of God to 'rise up before the hoary head and honour the face of the old man,' meets it cheerily when its ravages are visible in his own case, just as he would meet a slow but mortal disease. Never to act, or to feel, or to be again as in the days of youth or middle age ; finding that 'his very self shall be no more his own,' yet the aged Christian looks with matured hope to the home he is to enter through the grave and gate of death ; the sense of his weakness adds strength to his faith ; the decline of physical life and the presence of physical suffering, endears the resurrection hope ; the decay of intellectual vigour makes him rest with calmer repose on Him who is made to His people 'wisdom,' and Who only asks of us the meek trust of infancy ; and in the mellowed tranquillity of a dim November day, he looks forward to the coming hour when the dead shall hear the Saviour's voice and shall come forth ; when his Lord and Master shall say, 'Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust ;' when the Lord Himself shall 'appear as the light of the morning when the sun ariseth, even a morning without clouds ;' and His people shall come forth from the graves, 'as the tender grass springeth out of the ground by clear shining after rain.'

How sweetly such thoughts harmonise with the commemoration of All Saints ! how fitly is it placed on the verge between autumn and winter !

THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS.

Brightly the golden splendours
Gleam in yon sunlit sky :
Kindles my heart the radiance,
Fills my enraptured eye.
Swiftly to that bright summer,
Hurries my lifetime on ;
Showers and chills of spring time,
Soon will be past and gone.

There is nor cloud nor shadow
O'er the deep azure driven ;
Labour and pain and sorrow
Break not that radiant heaven ;
Save a faint streak of dimness,
Lying athwart the light,—
'Tis the long line of shadow
Falling from Calvary's height.

Lord, in that beauteous summer,
Grant me my happy day ;
Shed Thou the joy and sunlight
Over my earthly way :
Yet, as I pass among them,
Point me where Thou hast trod ;
Take not away the shadow
Cast by the Cross of God.

J. E. F.

THE
MONTHLY PACKET
OF
EVENING READINGS

For Members of the English Church.

NOVEMBER, 1875.

ODDS AND ENDS OF WEATHER WISDOM AND FRAG-
MENTS OF FOLK LORE.

AUGUST.

‘What wondrous life is this I lead ?
Ripe apples drop about my head ;
The luscious clusters of the vine
Upon my mouth do crush their wine ;
The nectarine and curious peach
Into my hands themselves do reach ;
Stumbling on melons as I pass,
Ensnared with flowers, I fall on grass.’

Andrew Marvell.

As July owes its name to Julius Cæsar, so August is in like manner indebted to his nephew for its title ; though as Octavius was born in September it was originally proposed that this latter month should have the honour of being called after him ;* but the preference was at length given to August, not only because it stood immediately after July, which had just been renamed, but also because, according to Macrobius, it was in the month hitherto called ‘Sextilis’ that the Emperor Cæsar Augustus took possession of his First Consulship, that he celebrated three triumphs, that he received the oaths of allegiance from the legions that occupied the Janiculum ; that he reduced Egypt under the power of the Roman people, and that he put an end to all civil wars. It appears, therefore, that this month is, and has been, a most happy month to this empire, and the Senate therefore ordains that this month shall henceforth be called Augustus.

This name, which means, I believe, that which is consecrated by augury, and is therefore sacred and venerable, ‘awe-inspiring,’ in short, was given to Octavius [Cæsar B.C. 27, at the suggestion of Munatius

* And one above the rest would have had the name of the month August shifted and transferred unto September, for that Augustus was born in this and died in the other.—Holland : *Suetonius, Cæsar Augustus*, p. 85.

Plancus, because it represented him as being possessed of that divinity that doth hedge a king without displeasing the Roman citizens, as the use of the word itself would have done. A festival was held by the Romans in honour of the name, which was afterwards taken by all the Roman Emperors in turn, though after the reign of Diocletian it became 'Semper Augustus,' a title which is still born by the Austrian Emperors.

August had several other names belonging to it. Verstegan gives 'Arn Monath,' more rightly 'Barne Monat,' 'meaning thereby the filling of the barnes with corne;' and the Venerable Bede has 'Woed Monath,' or 'Weid Monath' (Weed Month), a name which was also given to June, and said to be on account of the growth of weeds at these two seasons of the year;* but Brady, in the *Clavis Calendar*, rather demurs to this explanation, and thinks that 'Woed Month' rather means the Saxon *peod*, which means a full covering or clothing, and was originally applied not only to the corn which covered the earth at this time, but also to clothes, in which sense the word was often used by the old writers—Milton among others.

' Here pilgrims roam that strayed so far to seek
In Golgotha Him dead Who lives in Heaven,
And they who to be sure of Paradise,
Dying put on the *weed* of Dominic,
Or in Franciscan think to pass disguised.'

Indeed, the name is not entirely disused even now, seeing that we still speak of widow's weeds. In Holland August is 'Oogst Maand,' or harvest month, and this has caused some people to fancy that the oast-houses, or places for drying hops, which are so numerous in Kent and Sussex, and in the other hop-growing districts, have some connection with the oogst harvest month, and are therefore literally only harvest-houses; but I believe the real derivation, according to the Rev. W. W. Skeat, is that oast is a corruption of the Dutch oast or drying-kiln.

August has not many proverbs belonging to it, and those there are are not specially noteworthy, for instance the old adage—

' Merry be the first,
Merry be the last,
And merry be the whole of August,
And give God the glory '—

might equally well be applied to any of the other eleven months, and so too might Tusser's :

' Dry August and warm
Doth harvest no harm.'

Perhaps in some respects rather better, for fine weather in August is by no means an unmitigated blessing. In Italy they hold that rain early in August carries off with it a sack of fleas and one of flies, while

* Aubrey (*Rem. of Gentilism and Judaism*) gives a saying, 'It is good to cut briars in the *sear* month,' which provides August with another name; but I do not know if it was ever generally used or not.

in England 'a wet August never brings dearth;' and in France it does still more, for instead of being merely a negative blessing—

'Quand il pleut en Août
Il pleut miel et bon moust.'

And this is also the case in Spain and Italy, where precisely similar proverbs are current; moreover in the latter country the August sun is objected to, for it is said to disappoint the maid, the host, and the priest, probably because it scorches up all the vegetables. The French and Italians are likewise of one mind, that

'En Août quiconque dormira
Sur midi s'en repentira.'

Or

'Qui dort en Août
Dort à son coût.'

While all the four principal European nations agree in the opinion 'that August bears the burden, September the fruit,' though they do not express the sentiment in exactly the same way, for at Brescia they say, 'August fills the kitchen and September the cellar;' while in France

'Ce qui Août n'aura cuit
Septembre ne le rôtera.'

And so, too, the German—'Was der August nicht kocht lässt der September ungebraten.'

There is another German saying: 'Nord winde im August bringen beständiges Wetter;' while the Russians, who have yet apparently to learn from Mrs. Malaprop that 'comparisons are odorous,' have a proverb to the effect 'that August is as much warmer than March as Asia is better than Africa,' and certainly whatever one may think of the relative merits of the two continents there can be no doubt about the truth of the first of these assertions.

It would appear from the English saying, 'You were born in August,' that an August child is as exceptionally fortunate as if he were born with a silver spoon in his mouth, or at any rate under a lucky star; though certainly poor Juliet, who was born in Lammas-tide, did not find this to be the case, yet no doubt she was the unlucky being who had to be sacrificed in order that the rule might be better proved.

The first of August is or was called indifferently S. Peter ad vincula, (being the day on which S. Peter's delivery from prison was commemorated. The reason that it was kept at this time of year rather than shortly after Easter, when the event really happened, was because the church of S. Peter ad vincula, on the Esquiline hill at Rome, which was built during the fifth century, was dedicated on this day), Gule of August*

* Comme le mois d'Août était le premier de l'année Egyptienne on en appelle le premier jour *Gule*: ce mot latinisé fit gule. Nos légendaires, surpris de voir ce nom à la tête du mois d'Août, ne s'oublèrent pas; ils en firent la fête de la fille du tribun Quirinus guéri d'un mal de gorge en baisant les liens de S. Pierre dont on célèbre la fête ce jour-là.—GEBELIN.

—and Lammas-day—but the latter name was the one by which it was generally known. Witness the old ballad of Otterburn—the one of which Sir Philip Sidney said, ‘I never heard the old ballad of Percy and Douglas, that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet.’

‘It fell about the Lammas-tide,
When the husbands winn their hay;
The doughty Douglas bound him to ride
Into England to catch a prey.’

The consequence of which rash undertaking was that

‘The Douglas lost his life,
And the Percy was led away.’

Lammas-day was one of what were called the cross quarter days (the other three being Whitsuntide, Martinmas, and Candlemas), and as such was formerly well known; indeed I believe that in Scotland these days are still as much used as the regular quarter days are in England, and it was on this account that, according to Brady, ‘Latter Lammas’* came to be used in the same sense as ‘at the Greek calends’ or on ‘Tibs-eve,’ all of which sayings convey the same meaning, as ‘the to-morrow come never,’ or, ‘when two Sundays come together,’ which are still in use amongst us. It appears that Augustus Cæsar was the originator of ‘Ad Græcas Calendas,’ for a period which never could arrive, as the Greeks had no calends in the divisions of their months; or at any rate, according to Suetonius, he first brought this speech into fashion by saying of certain debtors that ‘when any one wishes to signify that he is insolvent, he says that he will pay on the Greek calends;’ and Queen Elizabeth availed herself of this expression when she replied to the Spanish Ambassador who told her on what terms she might expect to be saved from the impending war with Spain; the terms, according to Fuller, being:—

‘These to you are our commands—
Send no help to the Netherlands;
Of the treasures took by Drake
Restitution you must make;
And those Abbeyes build anew
Which your father overthrew;
If for any peace you hope,
In all points restore the Pope.’

To which the queen replied, “Ad Græcas bone Rex fierit mandata calenda,” which Fuller translated—

‘Worthy king know this your will,
At latter Lammas we’ll fulfil.’

In former days when people were not so particular about derivations as they have since become, and were satisfied to take the most obvious

* Latter Lammas meant originally that period which was allowed to tenants to bring their wheat to their lords in backward season; an indulgence which, however requisite at times, was so often abused as to occasion it to be stigmatised in the old proverb.—*Clavis Cal.* p. 114.

that presented itself, without troubling themselves to go further with the chance of faring worse, the word 'Lammas' was supposed to come from 'lamb's mas,' either because lambs were out of season at that time (which seems a rather Irish reason), or from a conceit entertained that S. Peter was the patron saint of lambs on account of Our Blessed Lord's order to him to 'feed My lambs,' and therefore a mass was instituted on this day in order that S. Peter might protect the lambs from catching cold after having been shorn, and the tenants who held land belonging to the Cathedral of York, which was dedicated to S. Peter ad vincula, were obliged to bring a live lamb with them to the cathedral on that day, but it is evident that this is only another of the many cases in which the customs have sprung from the name, rather than the name from the customs. Lammas is, I believe, now generally allowed to come from *Hlaf* masse, or loaf mass, but there may have been another still earlier derivation, for there was an old heathen custom of celebrating a festival in honour of the fruits of the earth at this time, and Vallency, in the *Collectanea*, says that *La ith mas*, or as it was pronounced *La ee mas*, was the day of oblation of grain, and that *ith* meant all kinds of grain, especially wheat and *mas*, every description of fruit, particularly acorns, whence mast. In latter days this festival was converted into a thanksgiving for the first fruits of the harvest, when Christians met to thank 'The Lord of the Harvest' for

'The ripened grain,
The crops safe gathered, sent to cheer
His servants through another year;
For all sweet holy thoughts supplied
By seed time and by harvest tide'—

though the harvest home was fifteen days later on S. Roche's day. On Lammas day, bread which had been made from the new wheat was solemnly blessed; and in some places tenants were expected to bring an offering of new wheat to their landlords on the 1st of August, so that from this practice all new wheat came to be called Lammas wheat, though of course all had not been harvested by that time, for there is a saying that after Lammas the corn grows as much by night as it does by day on account of the heavy dews. On this day the *Peter's Pence* became due, which was a tax of a penny upon every hearth or chimney throughout England. According to Matthew of Westminster, it was first levied somewhere about the year 727, when Ina, King of Wessex, established the Schola Anglorum * (which was afterwards called the Hospitale di S. Spirito in Vico de Sassia) in Rome, and funds being wanted, the king laid a penny tax upon every family throughout the whole territory of the west Saxons, and according to Mr. Thoms, the sum thus collected amounted to £200 6s. 8d. The practice, which has long since been dis-

* The object of this institution was to bring up the English kings, priests, and laity in Latin learning, and to afford a refuge to English pilgrims.

used in England, soon found its way abroad, where, even at the present time, little boxes, 'pourv les deniers de S. Pierre,' may be seen in the principal cathedrals and churches.

Independently of Lammas, which seems a purely English day, there is a saying connected with the 1st of August, current in France, 'quand il pleut le premier Août c'est signe qu'il n'y aura pas de regain' (after-math); while in Albania the country people hold that the first twelve days of August foretell the character of the weather during the ensuing twelve months.

The 6th of August is the day on which we commemorate the Transfiguration of Our Blessed Lord. This feast had long been celebrated in the Greek Church, where it is called the Feast of Tabor, but was only instituted in the Western Church by Pope Calixtus, in 1456, in order that the deliverance of Belgrade from Mahomet II., who was forced to raise the siege on this day, might be remembered. Mr. Baring Gould says that it was an ancient custom on this day for the deacon to press three drops of juice from a ripe grape-bunch into the chalice for mass. There are two proverbs, Spanish and Russian, belonging to this day, the first being one of the usual weather-wise description. As the weather is on the day of the Transfiguration, so it will be the rest of the year, while the second tells of the approach of winter. 'The Saviour is coming, get your gloves ready.' The 7th, which is also marked in the Anglican Calendar as the *Name of Jesus*, has no special saying attached to it, but S. Lawrence (10th August) is well provided. The Germans say—

'Um Sanct Laurenti Sonnenschein
Bedeutet ein gutes Jahr von Wein,'

and also 'Regnet's an Laurentii Tag, giebt es viele Mäuse;' while in Illyria and at Lozere, there are two almost precisely similar proverbs. If it is fine on S. Lawrence day, and the day of the Assumption, there will be a good vintage, and the French and the Italians agree in the

'S'il pleut à la Saint Laurent,
La pluie vient à temps;
Si elle vient à Notre Dame,
Chacun encore l'aime;
Si la pluie vient à S. Barthélemy,
Souffle lui au derrière,'

which Mr. Swainson translates thus from the Italian version, 'If it rain on S. Lawrence it is rather late; if it rain on the Assumption, it is, let me tell you, also good; but if it rain on S. Bartholomew, all you can do is to give the saint a buffet;' while the Germans also connected S. Lawrence and S. Bartholomew—

'Wie Laurenz und Bartholomäi
So dich zum Herbst gefreu.'

Another French saying is that—

'A la Saint Laurent
La faucille au froment.'

And also 'S. Laurent arrange les blés noir;' while in many places the shoot-

ing stars which fall on or about the 10th August are called S. Laurence's fires, or S. Laurenz sparks. I do not know of any Spanish proverb belonging to S. Lawrence, which is curious, as S. Lawrence was, probably on account of his birth, a special favourite in that country, and indeed ranked only second to San Jago in the popular estimation. Certainly Philip II. did his utmost for his honour by building the gridiron palace at the Escorial (which is one among the many places which lays claim to being considered the eighth wonder of the world), as a reward to the saint for having apparently made no objection when the exigencies of the battle of S. Quintin, which was further fought on the 10th August, rendered it necessary to destroy his convent in that place. The king is said to have made a vow that no time should see S. Lawrence so much venerated as by him, and this being the case, it was as well that the gridiron, the implement of his martyrdom, was an instrument which lent itself fairly well to architectural purposes! In Hazlitt's Brand's *Popular Superstitions*, it mentions that it has been suggested that S. Lawrence was the patron saint of idleness; if so it must have been by the same 'rule of false,' which made Bishop Valentine the patron of love-letters, and as such may have been connected with the Lazy Lawrence invoked in the school rhyme—

'Lazy Lawrence, let me go,
Don't hold me winter and summer too.'

And in this case must be identical with that mysterious individual whom the Sussex peasant firmly believes to have the power of infecting him with idleness (as if any supernatural agency was required to bring on an attack of this complaint); but 'old Lawrence has hold of him,' is an accusation which is frequently brought against, or an excuse made by a lazy person, though I should doubt whether this old Lawrence had anything saintly in his composition, and was not rather allied to the 'Old Harry,' 'Old Nick,' and 'Old Gooseberry,' the diabolic nature of whom is clearly evident.

The 15th of August is the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This festival was originally kept in commemoration of her Dormitio or sleeping; but a tradition, which dates apparently from the second century, though it was not generally accepted till the fifth, is, I believe, the foundation of the Roman Catholic belief that the Blessed Virgin was taken up, both body and soul at once, into heaven. The legend asserts that when the apostles, on the third day after her interment, visited the grave in which they had laid the Mother of our Lord, they found it open and filled with a growth of roses and white lilies, and henceforth these flowers became her special emblems, in accordance with the text, 'I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley.'* Mr. King (*Sacred Trees and Flowers*) says that the flower which usually appears in connection

* Pilgrims to the Holy Sepulchre reported that the Rosa San Maria marked every spot where the Virgin and Joseph rested on their flight to Egypt.—Moncure Conway, *Fraser's Mag.* Dec. 1870.

with the Virgin is the great white lily (*Lilium candidum*) of our gardens, but singularly enough the native country of this lily is still a matter of dispute.

It is nowhere found wild in Palestine, and it has even been suggested that it may have been imported from the New World, but this is certainly not the case, since the true white lily appears in many Italian and Flemish pictures of earlier date than the first voyages of Columbus, but though it is now cultivated in both Syria and Egypt as an exotic bulb, it seems probable that it must have been known in those countries from a very early time, and that the beauty and purity of its blooms caused it to be regarded with peculiar reverence long before the Christian era. It seems to be this lily which was believed by the Jews to counteract all witchcraft and enchantment, for which reason Judith is said to have crowned herself with a wreath of lilies when she set out for the tents of Holofernes. In Spain, too, the lily has been credited with the power of restoring those who have been transformed into animal shapes. There are two other legends which connect the lily with the Blessed Virgin, one, the most beautiful, which belonged to the Cistercians, was that there was a brother of their order so rude and unlettered, that he could be taught nothing, and could remember nothing but the Ave Maria of the angelical salutation, this, however, he repeated incessantly. At last he died, and there sprang from his grave a lily of pure gold with the words 'Ave Maria' traced on every leaf. The other, the Dominican legend, accounts for the three mystical flowers which are usually represented beside the Virgin. There was a famous master of the Dominicans, who had for many years been tormented by doubts concerning the Mother of our Lord, and at last knowing that a brother of his order, named Egidius, was of great renown for sanctity and divine illumination, he determined to lay his difficulty before him. Brother Egidius, foreknowing both his coming and the object of the visit, set out to meet the master, and as he approached he struck the ground with his staff, and exclaimed, 'Oh, master of the Preachers! *Virgo ante partum*,' and immediately on the spot which he had stricken there sprang out of the ground a single lily flower whiter than snow. Again brother Egidius struck with his staff, saying, 'Oh, doubting Master, *Virgo in partu*,' and a second lily appeared, and again he struck with the words, 'Oh, my brother, *Virgo post partum*,' and a third lily sprang up to illustrate the miracle, and to confirm the faith of the master.

In Germany the day of the Assumption is called 'Our Lady's Cabbage Feast,' 'Unserer Frauen Kräuteweih,' because it is the custom among the Roman Catholics on this day to bring cabbages and ears of wheat with them to church to be blessed, which they keep as a safeguard against storms, sickness, evil spirits, etc., while Bishop Hall in the *Triumph of Rome*, says that in England it was customary to implore blessings on the herbs, roots, plants, and flowers on this day, and Barnaby Googe also mentions the practice:—

'The Blessed Virgin Marie's feast hath here his place and time,
Wherein departing from the earthe she did the heavens climbe ;
Greate bundles then of hearbes to churche the people faste doe beare,
The which against all hurtful things the priest doth hallowe theare.

* * * * *

For sundrie witchcrafts by these hearbes are wrought, and divers charms,
And caste into the fire they are thought to drive all harmes,
And every painful grief from man or beast for to expel.'

There is another German saying, 'Krut wigge breuget et Salt in de Appeln'—'Cabbage feast brings salt to the apples if it rains on that day.' In Bohemia they hold that the Holy Queen of Heaven brings the first nuts ; and at Milan, that rain on Our Lady's day is good, but on S. Roche (the day after) it is too late ; while in Prussia they believe that—

'Himmel fahrt Maria Sonnenschein
Bringt gute Wein.'

And the husbandman's practice also states that if the sun shines on the 15th August, that is a good token, especially for wind, though one would have thought that a prudent husbandman would not have approved of wind at this time of the year, when—

'The leathery pears and apples
Hang russet on the bough.'

The 16th is S. Roche's day, or as he is called in the *Golden Legend*, S. Rock. There it relates that, having himself been cured of the plague by an angel, with touching and blessing he cured the diseased in the hospital, and healed all the sick in the city of Placentia. Being imprisoned, and about to die, he prayed that he might live three days longer in contemplation of the Passion, which was granted him ; and on the third day an angel came to him, saying, 'O Rock, God sendeth me for thy soul ; what thou now desirest, thou shouldst ask.' Then S. Rock implored that whoever prayed to him after death might be delivered from pestilence ; and then he died. And anon an angel brought from heaven a table whereon was divinely written in letters of gold that it was granted, 'That who that calleth to Saynte Rocke mekely, he shall not be hurte with ony hurte of pestylence ;' and the angel laid the table under Rock's head, and the people in the city buried S. Rocke solemnly, and he was canonised by the Pope gloriously.*

Hone (*Every Day Book*) thinks that the common saying applied to anybody in rude health ; that they are 'sound as a roach' may have been derived from familiarity with the legend and attributes of this saint, and that our ancestors when they used this saying meant that they were or wished to be as sound as S. Roche, and that the fish has therefore nothing to do with it beyond the accidental resemblance of the name. S. Roche was, as I have said before, the day on which the English

* Every month, however, had its tutelar Saint against the pest, and some had more ; but the chief favourites were, SS. Blasius, Dionysius, Erasmus, Pantaleo, Vitus, Gregory, Cyriac, Christopher, Achatius, Ægedius, Barbara, Catherine, and Margaret.

harvest home, the Scotch kern, and the Yorkshire mele supper, all rejoicings for the successful ingathering of the harvest, were celebrated.

The 'Harvest Home' is a festivity common to all European countries, and undoubtedly of the most remote antiquity, for Macrobius tells us that among the heathen the masters of families, when they had got in their harvest, were wont to feast with their servants who had laboured for them in tilling the ground; while Durandus mentions that it was formerly usual among the Gentiles for the servants, both male and female, to take their masters or employer's places after the gathering in of the harvest, and usurp their authority for a time, and Bourne* thinks that the origin of both these customs is Jewish, and cites Hospinian, who tells us that the heathens copied this custom from the Jews, and at the end of the harvest offered up their first-fruits to the gods, for the Jews always rejoiced and feasted at the gathering in of the harvest; but it appears to me that it is rather a work of supererogation to try and fix the origin of such a very simple and natural custom on any one nation in particular. Besides, it is obvious that the Jewish theory is incorrect, since the Kelts and the Teutons celebrated some kind of harvest home long before they could possibly have had sufficient connection with the Jews to induce them to borrow one of their customs. Moreover, it is so certain that the natural feeling at the conclusion of harvest would be one of relief that the principal labour of the year was successfully over, and that this feeling would naturally show itself by rejoicing and feasting when the work was done, that it seems unnecessary to seek further for a reason.

Our English name, 'Harvest Home,' is supposed to be derived from the Old English Haerfast—*q. d.*, herb feast, and is defined by Ash to be the last load of harvest, the feast at the end of the harvest; while the Scotch *kern* is thought to mean corn, and the Yorkshire 'mele' may come either from the Norse 'mele' corn, or 'mele' a company; while, according to Bloomfield, in Suffolk, the last load of corn is called 'the horkey load, and the supper afterwards, 'the horkey feast,' for in his ballad of 'The Horkey,' he says:—

'Home came the jovial horkey load,
Last of the old year's crop;
And Grace among the green boughs rode,
Right plump upon the top.
'This way and that the waggon reeled,
Sure never queen rode higher;
Her cheeks were coloured in the field,
And ours were by the fire.'

In most parts of England the last load was generally accompanied with a song, which is different in different counties; in some parts of Surrey it is—

'We have ploughed,
We have sowed,
We have reaped,
We have mowed;

* Hazlitt's *Brand*, vol. ii.

Ne'er a load
Over-thrown,
But have brought home
Every load.

Harvest Home, hip, hip, hurrah.'

While the Lincolnshire ditty is—

'The boughs do shake and the bells do ring,
So merrily comes our harvest in.
Our harvest in. Our harvest in.
So merrily comes our harvest in.
Hurrah.'

In Yorkshire it is customary when the harvest is won in any farm for one of the labourers to mount on a wall, or bank, and proclaim—

'Blest be the day when Christ was born,
We have gotten mele of master's corn,
Wele bun and better shorn.
Hurrah, hurrah.'

And at Cleveland the rhyme is—

'Weel bun and better shorn
Is Master Rawson's corn.
We hev her, we hev her,
As fast as a feather.
Hip, hip, hurrah.'

In Hertfordshire, according to the *Folk Lore of British Plants*, there used to be an odd custom at the end of the harvest. A final handful of the grain was reserved and tied up under the name of the *Mare*. The reapers in turn threw their sickles at it to cut it down. Whoever succeeded in doing so, called out 'I have her!' 'What have you?' shouted the rest. 'A mare! a mare!' 'What will you do with her?' 'We'll send her to ——,' mentioning any farmer who had not yet got all his wheat cut. This is called crying the mare. And, according to the *Book of Days*, there used to be a similar custom in the Isle of Skye. A farmer having there got his harvest completed, the last cut handful was sent under the name of 'Goabbir Bhacagh' (the cripple goat), to the next farmer who was still at work upon his crops, it being of course necessary for the bearer to take some care that on delivery he should be able instantly to take to his heels, and so escape the punishment which would be otherwise sure to befall him. Of course these are only a few among many harvest customs, which though they differ in many other respects, all agree in one important essential—they all end in a feast. There are many songs that specially belong to the harvest suppers, and one is a special favourite, but I can now only remember two lines, and I cannot be quite certain whether they are consecutive or not—

'We've done it once, boys, and we'll do it again;
So merrily hunt the fox down the red lane.'

There is another old favourite, which is generally sung at the conclusion—

'Here's a health to our master,
The founder of this feast;
I hope to God with all my heart
His soul in heaven may rest.

'And all his works may prosper
Whatever he takes in hand,
For we are all his servants,
And all at his command.

'Then drink, boys, drink,
And mind you do not spill ;
For if you do you must drink two,
For 'tis our master's will.'

Tusser would certainly have approved of the sentiments contained in this song, since in his *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry*, he recommends that—

'In harvest time harvest folks, servants and all,
Should make altogether good cheere in the hall ;
And fill out the black can of bleith to their song,
And let them be merry all harvest-tide long.
Once ended thy harvest let none be beguiled,
Please such as did please thee, man, woman, and child ;
Thus doing with always suche helpe as thou can,
Thou winnest the praise of the labouring man.'

Apart from the 'Harvest Home,' the inhabitants of Cornwall have two proverbs connected with the harvest itself, which it may be as well to mention here ; first, if there is—

'A rainbow in the morn,
Put your hook in the corn ;
A rainbow at eve,
Put your head in the sheave.'

And also—

'When the corn is in the shock,
Then the fish are on the rock.'

The fish here alluded to is the pilchard, which visits the coast of Cornwall early in autumn. In Scotland, also, there is a belief connected with the corn mentioned by Dalziel (*Darker Superstitions of Scotland*), that in Enhallow, or the Holy Isle, if corn were reaped after sunset, blood would flow from the stalks, and I have heard the same tradition told of one of the great English battle-fields, but I forget which. In the Orkneys, moreover, there is one day in the harvest on which the reapers abstain from work, because otherwise the ridges will bleed ; but no reason is given for this belief.

The 19th is dedicated to SS. Louis and Sebald, but the latter saint lays claim to the Belgian belief that this is a good day for turnip sowing, for S. Sebald (who to oblige a poor man turned icicles into logs of wood), can cause each seed to produce a fine root ; while S. Louis must content himself with the German, 'Um den Ludwigstag pflegt warmes Sommerwetter gern in Regen umzuschlagen der an acht Tage dauert.'

The 24th is S. Bartholomew's day, who, like all the Apostles, has several weather-wise sayings connected with him—

'S. Bartholomew
Brings the cold dew.'

Because the nights now begin to be cold; and for the same reason, no doubt, the Poles have a saying that S. Bartholomew shortens the afternoons. The *Book of Knowledge* asserts that if it rains on this day, it rains for forty days after, which is certainly contradicted by—

‘ All the tears S. Swithin can cry
S. Bartholomew’s dusty mantle wipes dry.’

At Bordogne it is said that—

‘ S’il pleut à la Saint Barthélemy
Il y aura assez de raves et de regain.’

And there is another French saying—

‘ A la Saint Barthélemy
La perche au noyer
Le trident au fumier.’

While the *Shepherd’s Calendar* does not tell us much news, when it says if this day be misty, the morning beginning with a hoar-frost, the cold weather will soon come, and a hard winter. Still—

‘ If Bartlemy-day be fair and clear
We may hope for a prosperous autumn this year.’

The 26th is S. Lissander’s, and in the north of Italy the peasants believe that it always rains on this day, and therefore they call the saint to whom it is dedicated the Waterer, or Water Carrier; whence the proverb—

‘ San Lessander daquarol
O che l’ piov, o che l’ se dol.’

The 28th is S. Augustine’s, of whom the Venetians say, ‘ S. Augustin taca tacon.’ On S. Augustine’s darn your clothes, in preparation for winter.

B. C. C.

THE WORK OF WOMEN AT HOME FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

(*A Paper read by the Bishop of Bloemfontein, at Rugby, July 8, 1875.*)

‘ Let me write the ballads of a nation, and whoever will may make the laws !’

MAY we not say that it is the women who inspire the ballads, while the men make the laws?

The reign of Love is mightier than the reign of Law. Law touches the actions only; Love touches the springs of action. ‘ As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he,’ (Prov. xxiii. 7.) Touch the heart of England, and the life-blood will flow forth through every artery, and back again through every vein. And it is the women of England who influence the heart of England; if silently, so much the more surely.

Our thoughts on the ‘ Supply and Training of Women for Mission

work abroad,* forestall most of what might here be said, as to that part of women's work.

Those thoughts may be roughly summed up in the following words :— For the development of true life—of church life—home life—women are needed everywhere ; women who have realized the ideal of that life. If needed everywhere, then abroad as well as at home. And if women of the right sort, with leisure for work, are not to be found on the spot, then they must be sent forth from the mother-land. Some must go.

And who? Not the *useless* members of home and church. Not those who have a distinct home-duty that none other can do for them ; *e.g.* a wife or mother. But, *those who would be missed*, wherever they have lived ; and *those whom God has called*, by His special inward vocation, and by His co-operating Providence : giving them 'a sound mind in a sound body,' and circumstances that leave them free to respond to that inward call.

If we thoughtfully review these classes, we shall find among them *four*, willing to go forth for the Master, yet commanded to stay.

1. Those tied by untransferable home-duties.
2. Those forbidden to go, by parents, or others in authority.
3. Those who, in whatever way, are not strong enough.
4. Those who are conscious of no vocation for this special form of work.

All these, from among even the small number of those whose wills are absolutely yielded to their Lord, so as to care little where or how they spend themselves for Him !

Many more there are, less absolutely given up to Him, hitherto, and yet willing and able, in the strength of the body of Christ, to do something. Power is needed of every possible kind ; physical, mental, moral, social, spiritual. And there are many in the body of the baptized, conscious of power in some way or other, and willing to put it forth, if under authority, and without much of that dreaded element, personal responsibility—many such there are, who would be useless, if alone.

And every educated woman in England, whether she realize it or not, is daily helping, or hindering, the work of Foreign Missions. For it is Christ's work ; one that cannot be ignored or neglected without sin ; and it is not of men only, but of women also, that our Lord has said : 'He that gathereth not with me, scattereth.'

Women at home, then, have a manifold work for the Mission-field abroad. Let us ponder over it a while, in detail.

I. WOMEN OF THIS GENERATION TRAIN THE NEXT GENERATION.—The tone of thought and action as to Foreign Missions, fifty years hence, will depend, to an extent that can never be known on earth, upon the young mothers of the present day. In Sacred History, it is not without deep

* See *Authorized Report of Missionary Conference*, June 22, 1875. Wells Gardner, Paternoster Buildings.

significance that the names of the mothers of Judah's kings are so often recorded.

Let us recall our own childhood ; our nursery tales and pictures ; the food and exercise provided for our imagination and affections ; and then our school-room days, at home or elsewhere. Could we not tell each other of a lack never to be supplied, or of memories that can never grow cold—as to interest kindled or unkindled in Mission-work—by pictures and stories, and 'Children's Missionary Meetings or Guilds, and little plans for helping the good Missionaries,' such as God's little children, still 'glistening with baptismal dew,' delight in? If we were early taught to pray for Foreign Missions, has the habit ever wholly died away? If not, is that habit easy to acquire?

The inference is obvious. The only question for each to ask herself is : 'What am I doing to help or hinder the Church of the future, in this, her world-wide Mission?'

II. WOMEN CAN INFLUENCE GENERAL SOCIETY—their equals, in age and position, as well as little children. The more refined and cultivated they are, the greater will be their power over others. Mere 'conversation' is a power for good or evil compared with which the much-talked-of power of modern inventions is but a plaything.

Now, what are the ordinary topics of conversation—apart from the way of handling them? There are some, indeed, that were better unnamed ; others, in which it were well for women to remember Apostolic teaching, and avoid intruding into things that they know not. Others again there are which are mischievous simply from their utter folly ; involving that '*foolish* talking and jesting, which are not convenient ;' quite distinct from the innocent, light-hearted talkings as 'children of the free,' which Our Father will never blame.

But, while we talk fluently on topics of 'general interest,' how often do any of us dare to allude to 'Missions,' as to a topic that *ought* to be of general interest?

The Arctic Expedition, the Ashantee War—these have their champions in abundance ; among England's Volunteers for these ventures, who is not proud to reckon a personal friend? But carry on the topic of 'ventures for a noble cause, and speak of a friend or brother fit for the highest posts in England, and yet, gone forth to be a Missionary ;' and who is not made conscious, that if the contemptuous wonder be unexpressed, it is chiefly through mere courtesy?

These things ought not so to be ; and Christian women are responsible, to a great extent, for not suffering it so to be. We need not 'drag in' the subject of Missions ; but 'a word spoken in due season, how good is it!'

To uplift the Mission-banner from the mire ; to silence—if only by their own eloquent silence—the first word of ridicule or of ignorant impatience, this is within woman's province, and the Master expects it of her. And then, by quietly-told *facts*, to turn this negative testimony to what is positive, and, God helping her, to win enthusiasm for the cause that in

her watchful hearing has been put to shame—is this too much for any Christian woman to do or dare for her Lord? ‘In the Name of our God, we will set up our banners!’

III. With a view to this, WOMEN ARE BOUND TO BE WELL-INFORMED, as Christians and as Church-women, of the progress of Church Missions.

It would be counted ‘ignorance,’ not to have heard of the Fiji Islands, and their late annexation. Is it a more pardonable ignorance not to have heard of—many a new colony of the King of kings—many a fair territory annexed to His possessions? Are we to live through our appointed term in this world’s long history, and do nothing to correct the notion (hardly ever attacked at all till lately!) that an ‘interest in Missions’ is the amiable peculiarity of *some* Christians, instead of being the common interest of all?

IV. WOMEN CAN USE THEIR PEN for Mission-work. Not as ‘authors,’ necessarily; though some might well expend on such a cause the powers bestowed upon them for the good of the Church and the glory of God; but in ordinary correspondence. A real habit, once formed, of trying to widen and deepen Mission-work influence, in *any way whatever* that the Master may point out, would soon exert its power over a woman’s ever-ready pen.

Many an idle note, about—nothing at all—would, by degrees, give place to some gentle reminder of a far-off corner of the earth. We do not mean ‘a begging letter,’ but a word as from sister to sister, just naming—as one who cannot help naming—the far-off brother!

Might not something be done, moreover, yet more directly and definitely, by a little forethought and combined action? We have heard of an invalid who spends her long leisure-hours in writing illuminated letters, exquisitely penned, full of holy and helpful thoughts to soldiers in India. Other friends arrange as to the sending; hers is simply the willing and skilful hand; adding to the words of Christian sympathy some home-flower, thoughtfully chosen according to the time of year, and painted at the beginning of the letter, to bring back thoughts of home and ‘mother.’

Could not some of our lonely Missionaries be remembered thus practically, in some way suited to their need? And especially in parishes which God has honoured by taking from them one of His own volunteers for ‘Foreign Service.’ Could not some combine to send forth a stream of regular information as to home-life and work, thus quickening sympathies, and giving scope for that great law of action and re-action between the heart and the extremities, which rules the spiritual as well as the natural body? ‘Love chiefly grows in *giving*.’

V. WOMEN CAN ‘WORK.’ No one can deny that this is a fitting occasion for her special ministry.

Many agencies of this kind are already in operation: Working-Parties, Work Societies, &c., where materials are given out, to be sold, here or abroad, when made up, for the friends of the Mission.

Details would be needless. Here, as in all other things, judgment is needed ; that 'right judgment' which our Church bids us pray for 'in all things,' and which the All-ruling Spirit of God will condescend to give us, even for the details of a Missionary Working Party ! There will be difficulties ; there may be mistakes ; but the effort is none the less to be made, where God points it out as suitable.

Might not work for Foreign Missions, in some such practical form, become a motive for little girls, in the often unattractive task of 'learning to work ?'

VI. To *some* women, among those whose Mission-work lies at home, is given a special calling ; even that of YIELDING-UP—not themselves, but what is dearer than themselves—SON OR DAUGHTER, for Foreign Service in the KING's army.

'Will you give me *Coley* ?' That question, asked by Bishop Selwyn, of the mother of Patteson—has it not become almost proverbial ? We cannot but suspect that the secret dread of such a question is keeping back many a Christian mother from opening her heart to Christ's Commandment as to Foreign Missions. 'I feel I have brought it on myself,' a mother has been heard to say, when her son had gone forth ; 'I brought him up with such a high ideal of Missionary work !'

And are not many kept back from honest prayer, that the Lord of the Harvest will send forth labourers into His Harvest, by the secret reservation, 'Only, Lord, not *my* Son !—not *my* Pastor ?'

VII. WOMEN CAN SHEW HOSPITALITY.—'A certain woman received Him into her house,' has been written again and again, in the Record on High, concerning many a 'Martha,' and her receiving of Christ Himself, in those of whom He has said : 'He that receiveth you, receiveth Me.'

To have 'lodged strangers'—for Christ's sake, not for mere kindness' sake—is a mark given by St. Paul of those eligible for a special office in the early Church. It is for the 'Sarah' to provide for the strangers whom Abraham is not forgetful to entertain. Lydia, Europe's first convert to Christianity, welcomed to her house the first Missionary of the Church. Circumstances may have changed, in these less simple days ; but should not the Missionary's heart be cheered, when at home for awhile, by the manifestation of the same spirit ? And is it not for 'the glory of the same Lord, Who accepts, in every age, each kindness done to His servants as done unto Himself ?'

VIII. WOMEN CAN PRAY.—This is the greatest work of all ; the secret strength of all other work.

True, it belongs to men, as much as to women. Yet, in speaking of women's work, I would especially remind you that this is a work within your reach at all times. The quiet intercession of many an invalid, the resolutely-dedicated time taken out of a life of active service, for the great work of intercession for Missions, and *united definite prayer together* for special needs—these weapons have a power in the whole Mission army,

which Eternity alone will fully reveal. 'More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.' There are those—

'Whose prayers and silent efforts Heaven employs
To do the good, while others make the noise.'

Many ways of working at home for Missions abroad have doubtless been omitted in the foregoing sketch, *e.g.* distributing periodicals, collecting money, &c., as well as giving money themselves, according to their ability. Some who cannot go in person, but who would be willing so to do, may have the means of enabling another to go, by providing, or combining with others to provide, what is needful for the cost of passage, outfit, and after-maintenance. Love is ingenious in self-sacrifice; fertile in resources; 'strong as death!' Why multiply suggestions? 'Charity never faileth.'

One more way of helping forward the work of Missions abroad must, however, be definitely named, being less obvious, perhaps, than others—**PERSONAL FAITHFULNESS IN HOME DUTIES.** The satirist must have no 'Mrs. Jelliby' among our Mission-workers to hold up to ridicule—a ridicule involving the holy cause which such a one caricatures. They must 'guide the house;' they must 'give none occasion to the enemy to speak reproachfully.'

It must be made evident that their interest in Missions is based on principle, not on feeling; and that this principle rules nothing less than their whole lives. A holy self-restraint, the mark of the Cross, must stamp every common duty. The intelligence, as well as the affections, must be evidently enlisted. There must be no silly talk about 'interesting natives,' &c.; no excited running to and fro, to more Missionary Meetings than they can inwardly digest, while their own servants, and the obvious claims of those at hand, are uncared for.

Our women at home, if they would be 'fellow-helpers to the truth,' must be 'keepers at home;' they must learn something of self-mastery and self-sacrifice; that so their witness may have power, and those who see that their charity extends to the ends of the earth may also see that it, 'begins at home.'

After all, the work is one, throughout all the world. For there is but one Lord; and 'He is the Great King over all the earth.' 'It is God which ruleth in Jacob,'—here, in the Church at home,—'and unto the ends of the earth.' Even there, the King must have His daughters, honourable women.

If even the annals of Heathendom are often made bright by the story of woman's devotion, and even the Spartan mother could add fortitude to her love, shall it not be reserved for Christian women to shew—

'A fairer strength than this,
Strength linked with weakness, steeped in tears and fears,
And tenderness of trembling womanhood,
But true as hers to Duty's perfect Law?'

RESTING IN PEACE.

THOUGHTS FOR ALL SAINTS' DAY.

RIPE and golden stood the harvest under the calm sky of August. In the west there lay a bank of red clouds, and above them the glow grew clearer until it passed into yellow, and thence into a warm green, which deepened overhead into blue ; and in the west the evening star hung trembling as if about to drop below the horizon and follow the mighty sun. The air was perfectly still—not a leaf stirred ; and the shocks of wheat and barley stood hanging their heavy heads, waiting to be garnered on the morrow. Field beyond field was cut, and ready for carrying ; and then, beyond the corn, one saw broad flat beds of luscious purple clover, and the eye went on to green meadows where the grass had grown thick again since June. And still further off was the pleasant sight of a snug white farm-house, the gable curtained with ivy, the porch screened with honeysuckle, and the verandah clouded over with clematis. There was no better land in the county than that of Eaton Farm ; no prettier cottage in the county than Eaton Farm House.

Many people said that there was no better man in the county than David Eaton.

He has come down the public path through his fields, and is leaning on a gate, and gazing into the wheat field. Two dogs—a pointer and a Skye terrier—lie lazily at his feet. He is a tall, stout, well-made young man, with grey eyes, fair hair, and a flaxen moustache ; a very good specimen of the young British farmer of the present day ; proud of his high place among the yeomanry, and not at all anxious to creep into a little back place behind the gentry. You would think him very happy if you saw the frank smile which takes possession of his face without his knowledge ; for his thoughts are pleasant.

A step aroused him from his pleasant thoughts ; he turned, and saw Dr. Horton.

‘ Good evening,’ said the doctor, a genial man of fifty.

‘ Good evening, sir,’ said David Eaton ; ‘ fine weather for getting in the crops.’

‘ So it is ; and you have a fine harvest. All the grain looks well.’

‘ All full and heavy,’ replied Eaton.

Dr. Horton put his arms on the gate, and stood silent a little while. He was rather given to moralising at times, and had seen much of life before he settled down at Upper Eaton. ‘ The doctor’s harvest may be carried at any season of the year,’ said he. ‘ Ear by ear it ripens and drops under the sickle of the reaper, whose name is Death. I have just come from Spiller End.’ This was a farm about a mile from Eaton Farm.

The doctor did not notice that David Eaton started a little at these

words, and that a slightly deeper colour came over the young man's face. 'How are Mr. and Mrs. Langton?' Eaton inquired.

'They are very well; their harvest is not yet at hand. But Bessie—well, I have told them the truth.'

All the colour now faded out of Eaton's face, and his teeth chattered. He could scarcely command his voice to ask, 'Is she ill?'

'Poor child! I have told the parents that I do not think she will get through the winter. *They* thought nothing of the cough, but *I* said last spring that it would be fatal. She is very young and very sweet.'

David was holding to the gate for support. 'Going to die! Bessie going to die! Doctor, doctor, I love her dearly; she does not know it. If I tell her, she will surely not die and leave me.'

'My poor boy!' said Dr. Horton in a startled voice, 'I guessed nothing of this. I wish I had not spoken so incautiously.'

David only groaned and muttered, 'Is Bessie going to die?' Dr. Horton laid his hand on the young man's shoulder, and at the kind caressing action all fortitude gave way, and sobs broke out wildly.

'I meant to ask her to-morrow night. The harvest will be carried to-morrow. I know now that I have the means to keep a wife. I have made my house so pretty for her; and to-morrow, when she comes to see the supper, I mean to take her out in the garden, and ask her to be my wife. I love her dearly.'

Tears were in Dr. Horton's eyes as he said, 'She cannot come to your supper. I have forbidden her to be out at night. Surely you have heard her cough.'

'She said it was nothing—only nervous.'

'To-day they sent for me,' the doctor continued. 'I found she had broken a blood-vessel in the lungs; and when I used the stethoscope, I discovered that the mischief was further advanced than even I supposed.'

'Shall you send her away?' gasped David.

'Oh, no; why should I? Madeira could not save her. She may as well stay in her warm happy home until Almighty God calls her from it.'

It was a long time before David spoke again. The great company of shining stars heard his next words. 'Shall I tell her what I had meant to say? Shall I tell her that I love her?'

'No,' said the doctor, decisively; 'no, you cannot keep her on earth, but you might make the road to Heaven very hard. Let her go in the Divine love, which is better than yours.'

'But may I not have one word from her?' poor David pleaded.

'Do not shorten her remaining days, and cloud them over with your sadness.'

His sadness! He turned hastily away, and strode off homewards. Dr. Horton looked after him. 'Eaton!'

The farmer stopped for a moment.

'Eaton, go and see the Vicar.'

‘Ay!’ answered David, and hurried on again, his dogs following quietly.

Dr. Horton too went home, where his comely wife sat behind her tea-tray awaiting him. A happy and prosperous man was the doctor, and few persons knew his history. When very young he had seen the girl to whom he was engaged disfigured by fearful burns, and dying before his eyes—and in the most distressing agony. So he knew well the trial through which David Eaton was passing; yet Dr. Horton, after ten years’ sorrow, married a merry, handsome woman, and he did not doubt that time, which is God’s healing balm, would heal this now-bleeding heart.

David sent his dogs to their kennels, bolted the doors, moistened his lips with a sip of cider, and shut himself into his own room.

In the morning his housekeeper asked him why he looked so grave and pale. He made no reply, but went out into his fields. Everything went on as had been arranged; the corn was carried home, cheers rang about the farmyard, neighbours dropped in and praised his harvest, and in the orchard long tables were laid ready for supper. This had been settled yesterday morning. Then the sun shone; now it was black night. Then it was summer; now it was frozen winter. David walked about among his men and his friends with a heart like ice, which could never again be thawed.

Everyone was there except ——. Lucy and William Langton came over, but David avoided meeting them or speaking; and after they had stayed about half an hour they went away, to return to the bedside of their poor sister.

‘I’m sure I wonder they came at all!’ cried Arabella Sharp, ‘with such long faces, and Lucy in her old holland gown and straw bonnet; they had better have stayed to nurse poor Bessie.’

‘They came out of compliment to Mr. Eaton,’ was Dr. Horton’s grave remark.

‘I hope Mr. Eaton’s flattered?’ said Arabella, who was not to be repressed. She saw David standing alone under an apple-tree, as if avoiding notice, and she tripped lightly towards him, saying, ‘O Mr. Eaton, is not this sad, is it not shocking?’

He guessed what she meant, but answered quietly, ‘What are you speaking of?’

‘What! haven’t you heard? Poor dear Bessie Langton! they say she going off in a decline, and not likely to live a month. Oh! I’m so sorry! She’s a good little thing, though she is so quiet and dowdy. I dare say life would not be very pleasant to her, and I hope she’s ready to die.’

David could scarcely command his temper while Miss Sharp was chattering. He looked at her round rosy cheeks, her bright black eyes, her shiny dark hair dressed in the height of the fashion; her hat, which bore a large blue feather, held in its place by a brilliant pink rose; her smiles, her sighs, her glances. He gazed at her, wondering if she was of the

same flesh and blood as sweet, gentle Bessie, whose clothes were so quiet and neat that he never knew what she had on, though he always felt that she was well dressed.

The long evening at last came to an end: the Vicar and the guests chanted grace, and slowly the fields and the orchard were cleared of visitors. David had not yet spoken to the Vicar; what should he say when he did speak? He truly loved and respected his pastor, but what help could any priest give him in this trial? He wanted to keep Bessie in this world, but she was going from it; no one could help him in this trouble. The only comfort he could find for himself lay in trying to catch a glimpse sometimes of her dear pale face. He would go next morning, and at all events inquire at the door if she were any better.

His heart beat and his voice trembled when he spoke to Mrs. Langton at the door of Spiller End Farm. 'She seems better to-day,' said the mother; 'more like herself. Will you come in and see her? She'll be glad to see you.'

David did not trust himself to speak, but followed Mrs. Langton into the parlour. There on a couch lay Bessie, very fragile, but with her gentle smile. She was knitting a scarlet woollen sock, and a little colour was thrown on her face. She did not look so ill as David had expected. He grew cheerful, thinking that perhaps, after all, she might recover. She, too, was cheerful, glad to hear of all the doings at the Harvest Home, though indeed he could give but a very poor account of them. 'I wish you had been there,' said he.

She shook her head. 'I shall never go to such pleasant things again.' Then, seeing his distressed looks, she spoke of other subjects, until Mrs. Langton said that she had talked enough, and Mr. Eaton must go. As he went away in silence down the lane he met the Vicar, Mr. Thorne. They spoke together about the sick girl. Suddenly Eaton asked—'Has Dr. Horton told you anything about me, sir?'

'No,' said the Vicar; 'what about you?'

'If she lived,' said David, 'she should be mine.'

'Then, may God help you as well as her!'

Presently David was able to speak openly to his parish priest of his attachment to Bessie Langton, and of his crushed hopes. 'And now,' he cried with a sob, 'I can do nothing for her, nothing!'

'You can do much,' said Mr. Thorne.

'Nothing,' repeated David, 'nothing!'

'Much by prayer,' said the Vicar.

'Folly!' said the young man angrily; 'shall I ask for a miracle in the nineteenth century? When she is smitten with a fatal disease, shall I mock God by praying Him to cure her? That would be to ask amiss, indeed!'

The Vicar answered very softly: 'Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Will He be no more entreated? Surely you, a son of the Church, should not speak thus. How do we pray for our sick?—That He will

give them a happy issue out of all their afflictions. My poor boy, death may be the happiest way out of them. You will be safe if you pray in those words—asking for recovery, if God so will ; if otherwise, for a happy death.'

David stood reflecting on the meaning of the quoted words : they did not always mean recovery from affliction of mind, body, or estate, but some good way out of them in the Lord's good time. He was startled from his thoughts by a splash of heavy rain which fell on his cheek. A thunderstorm was coming up. 'I must hurry on to Spiller End,' said Mr. Thorne.

'Thank you, sir,' said David ; for the Vicar had given him a sort of comfort. He could do something to help dear Bessie. He hardly noticed the storm which came up over the sky—the intense blue lightning, the crashing thunderpeals, the torrents of rain. Nature lay awed and bruised under this chastisement. When David entered his house he thanked God that his harvest was safely in, and he prayed that his neighbours might not suffer from the violent storm. So violent and so long was it, that at half-past four o'clock the lingering clouds were still dropping rain from their frayed edges ; but there was a fresh sweetness in the air from the revived trees and hedges. David walked through his clover field, and along a shady road to the corner of the village where stood the little church, so calm after the terrible storm. When the Vicar began to read Evensong, he caught sight of David's figure, and when he prayed for all sorts and conditions of men, he saw the young head lowered, and he knew that a very fervent cry was going up that the sick girl might find a happy way out of her affliction.

Day by day, after this evening, David Eaton was always present in church, sometimes at Matins, sometimes at Evensong, often at both. He was soothed and comforted by the regular offices which never alter, yet suit all our moods, whether of sorrow or of joy. And every Sunday he appeared at the sacred Feast, certain that if prayer be acceptable to God at all times, it must be especially so when we plead the death of His Son, and seek His presence in the manner He commanded in His dying hours.

Occasionally through the autumn and winter David called and saw Bessie on her couch ; once or twice he met the doctor there, and many times he met the clergyman. On one cold snowy day they had been talking all three together of the two points which press on dying minds—what they are losing and what they are gaining. Bessie seemed to think strangely little of leaving her parents and her family. 'I trust to meet them all again,' she said. And she went on to say that she believed she would think no more about them in Heaven than she had thought about them in church ; she would always love them and pray for them ; but as family affection is only one and a minor thing when we are in church, so she fancied in Heaven the praise of God would be the chief object of existence. If her dear ones were with her, it would add to her

blessedness ; if they were absent, God would make her sufficiently happy without them. As she spoke, the Vicar glanced at David, and something in the young man's face made him say to the sick girl—'Have you never any wish that you might stay on earth a little longer, and have the happiness which other women have? I mean especially the joy of possessing the love of some good, true man, who would make you his wife? Does this wish ever trouble you?'

'No, no!' she exclaimed. 'I believe that when I see God, when I stand beside my Saviour, I shall never think of any other love. I am sure that Divine love will absorb me so that I shall not miss anything belonging to earth. It is Christ Whom I want to see, nobody else.' So bright a look gleamed on her sweet face that to speak any more of earthly love would have been profane. They who possess God can easily dispense with human things.

After this day David did not see her again. She took to her own room, then to her bed, and lay dying.

So the winter passed over, Christmas came and went, and Lent was begun. And now there was a little table in the farmhouse at Spiller End, reserved especially as an Altar. With the inability to take her common food, Bessie felt stronger anxiety to be constantly fed with the Spiritual Food which the Lord hath commanded to be received.

As David Eaton strode over the fields hardened and blackened by the cruel March winds, he saw the Vicar coming along the road which led from Spiller End to the church. David waited until he came up, and then said, 'What news, sir?'

'The best,' replied Mr. Thorne. 'God gives her eternal peace. Amen.'

This news conveyed no shock to David ; he had expected it day by day for months past. It gave him no shock, but it showed him in a moment a great blank gulf in his life ; the one subject of his thoughts, his hopes, his affection, was gone. His life had always been lonely, now it was alone. His occupations had always been regular, now they would be mechanical. He could not utter one word, but went steadily on to the church, and stood and knelt as usual in his usual place, but no voice came from his parched lips. After the service he walked hastily home, fearful lest he should betray himself to any of his friends in the village. Every window had curtain drawn or shutter up. They all knew that Elizabeth Langton was at rest. What should anyone say? 'So He giveth His beloved sleep.'

But in the evening, when he had endured for half an hour the gossip of his housekeeper on the subject of mortal diseases, and for another hour the painful silence of his own study, he put on his hat, and in a fit of wild sorrow ran off to the Vicarage to hear what Mr. Thorne would say on the subject of Bessie's death, and the difference it made in David Eaton's life. At the Vicarage he had to wait until the Vicar came in, for he had been sent for to see Mr. Sharp, Arabella's father. David waited most impatiently ; he was vexed that Mr. Sharp should

send for the Vicar at so inopportune a moment. Old Joseph Sharp was a commonplace, easy-going, careless man ; he could not want Mr. Thorne one half so much as David wanted him. The waiting seemed very long, though Eaton occupied himself by examining all the prints on the study-walls, the calm Madonnas, the tender Magdalens, the stern St. John Baptist, and the beloved St. John the Divine. At length the Vicar came in.

‘Have you been waiting long?’ said he. ‘I have been with old Joseph Sharp : he is very ill with gout, and Dr. Horton fears that it will take a dangerous form, and prove fatal. His case is a sad one.’

‘One cannot much regret such as he,’ said David.

‘But one fears for such as he. It is not as if he had been careful and living up to as much as he knows. But he has habitually said that he was quite aware of the shortcomings of his life, but supposed he should do as well as others. Poor fellow!’

‘How unlike’—began David.

‘Yes,’ said Mr. Thorne, ‘and why did you want to see me?’ for he felt sure that David wished to speak about Bessie.

‘Only about myself,’ answered Eaton. ‘I am half ashamed to come and talk to you about myself : but this loss of what I had counted on during years past has left me quite bewildered. Something seems gone out of my life. I cannot grieve that she is at rest ; but you know I have no near relations, and now I cannot even keep any hopes for the future. I am very selfish.’

‘But of whom should you speak, if not of yourself? “The heart knoweth its *own* bitterness ;” it does not know the bitterness of any other, nor may we judge another. It is about himself that every man should consult his priest. Tell me now what you feel, and I will give you my help and counsel.’

‘It is all so blank!’ cried David. ‘I do not mean merely that Bessie is gone, but all my care and occupation is gone. Since she was first taken ill I have never ceased to pray for her. Morning, noon, and night I have prayed that she might have “a happy issue out of all her afflictions.” But now she is dead, and I have nothing to pray for.’

‘Dead!’ repeated the Vicar. “She is not dead, but sleepeth!” What is this thing which we call death? “He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,” who slept with their fathers many thousand years ago, and yet “He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” Do you not believe that “the maiden is not dead, but sleepeth?”’

‘I do believe it indeed,’ cried David Eaton. ‘I only used the word “dead” in its common meaning ; that is to say, that the soul is separated from the body.’

‘Then if she be still alive, why should you not pray for her?’

‘Oh, because,’ said David, ‘we don’t pray for the dead ; no, I mean we don’t pray for the sleeping.’

Mr. Thorne could not help smiling ; but he was glad to see that the

deep interest of the subject was rousing Mr. Eaton from his sad despondency. David also smiled, and added, 'I don't think I quite know what I mean.'

'I don't think you do,' said the Vicar. 'Perhaps you have not thought on this matter so much as I and others have. Perhaps I can teach you something.'

'I do not understand it at all!' cried David: 'it is all a great mystery; life, death, resurrection—we only make guesses at what they are. It seems to me that we use words without being sure of their meaning.'

'But we do know something; and no doubt we know enough. We are not bidden to know, but to believe.'

'And even if she be not dead, but sleeping, why should I pray for her? What need has she of my poor prayers now that she is in Heaven?'

'Surely,' said Mr. Thorne, 'you do not suppose that she is in Heaven?'

David stared at the Vicar. It had never entered his head that Bessie, so faithful, so pure, so happy, was not in Heaven. 'If she be not in Heaven,' he exclaimed, 'I wonder who is!'

'It is a foolish thing to wonder who is there, but you may be quite sure that Bessie Langton is not there. Why do you think she is in Heaven?'

'Are not the redeemed promised Heaven as their home?'

'Certainly; but when?'

'I suppose,' said David, with some hesitation, 'I suppose as soon as they are bidden to enter into the joy of their Lord.'

'And do you think,' said the Vicar, jumping up from his seat as a sharp ring at the hall-door bell startled the quiet house, 'do you think that our dear friend has been so bidden?'

'I hardly know what to think,' said David, also rising, as he heard steps in the hall.

'But just reflect,' Mr. Thorne said, speaking rapidly: 'that blessed command is to be given after the final judgment. And the final judgment has not yet come. And you know that it has not come because *you* have not been judged. Therefore you see it is impossible, by Christ's own words, that dear Bessie Langton should yet be in Heaven.'

As the Vicar said these words a servant opened the study door and said, 'Please, sir, old Smith is here again.'

'Then you must go, if you please, Eaton; this is that wretched old drunkard who comes to see me every now and then when the temptation is very strong on him. He must come here, and I may have to spend a couple of hours with him. So, good night; and do not doubt that Bessie is at rest, though not in the Heaven of eternity.'

'Good night, sir;' and as Eaton went out, old Smith came staggering in. David walked slowly through the village street, making his way home a little longer than usual, that he might walk off some of the ex-

citement which made him restless. If Bessie were at rest and not in Heaven, where was she? He had heard people speak vaguely of 'going to Heaven,' and when a righteous man died it was common to mention him as 'one who is now a saint in Heaven;' yet, as the Vicar said, the redeemed are not to be admitted into their Lord's joy until after the general judgment, at the end of the world. This was a subject on which the young farmer had not much thought; he had only concluded in a general way that the good are happy after death, and the wicked, unhappy. But how or where he had never considered.

He had not time to consider it now, for he met Dr. Horton.

'Just come from poor Joseph Sharp,' said the doctor.

'Is he any better?'

'No, perhaps rather worse. But this may go on for some time; only, if the disease attacks the stomach or the head, it is very serious, very serious.'

'Poor old fellow! not very fit to die, I'm afraid.'

'Now, is it not strange,' said the doctor: 'that man, careless, easy-going, eating-and-drinking, unspiritual, as he has always been, he seems to have no fear of dying? He says he shall do very well; he has never broken any of the Ten Commandments, he has been a faithful husband and a good father, and paid his men their wages regularly. He supposes that is about all that he had to do. What if he did lead a jolly life, who says it is wrong to be happy? He has been no hypocrite to pretend to be sorry for sins he never committed, or to care for the rules of a Church which he thought all a pack of nonsense.'

'Are those your remarks,' asked David, 'or Mr. Sharp's?'

'I have been repeating his remarks; but if you care to hear mine, I will only say that, if those words are true, that "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord," what will become of old Sharp's soul? It is strange how often these people who lead decent moral lives, and never strive after holiness, feel perfectly safe as to their future; while others, who spend three or four hours daily in prayer, who keep the fasts as the Church commands, who humiliate themselves by the confession of their misdeeds, and seek their Lord's presence in constant Communion, those men cry out in fear, "Lest," as St. Paul says, "after all, they themselves should be cast away."'

'Is there not some saying,' David asked, 'such as this: "The greater the saint, the greater the sinner?"'

'Yes; because the whiter the garment the blacker seem the spots on it. Oh! it makes me often angry! I see a careless worldly man sneering at his son, taunting him, jeering at him, speaking irreverently, almost blasphemously, of the mysteries of the Faith, and rendering the poor young fellow's life one long martyrdom; and why? Because the son's careful and holy life is a tacit reproach on the easiness and worldliness of the father's life. The father thinks his son a fool; but if foolery results in purity, prayerfulness, and endurance of contempt and persecution,

why, the son has the best of it after all. One would rather be the martyr than the tyrant.'

'That terrible pain has been spared to me,' said David; 'my father and mother died when I was a child, and my feeble attempts at holiness of life have not been persecuted at home. The jeers of one's acquaintances one can bear; but opposition from one's parents would make life an agony.'

'It does so in thousands of homes,' said Dr. Horton, 'and if any of the young Sharps had ever shown a saintly disposition, old Joseph would have been down on it just as if it was a crime like poaching or arson.'

Here Dr. Horton ended his moralizing, and went off in the direction of his home, leaving David Eaton to return to his farm. So many things had the young man to think of this night, that he found his mind wandering from his own trouble, and looking into those great questions of which he had been speaking.

He met Bella in the village next day. She was in her usual gay attire, but her regular smile was wanting. Her errand was to buy calf's-foot and isinglass and other food for the invalid. She told David that her father lay in the same state, suffering terribly at times, and crying out that he wished it was over one way or the other. There were tears in Bella's eyes as she repeated these words, and David thought that he had never seen her so pretty and so womanly. But as the schoolmaster came hurrying up to hear Bella's news, David retired, and went back to Eaton Farm and his necessary occupations.

He was anxiously wishing to renew his conversation with Mr. Thorne, and obtain some clearer notion of the state of the happy dead, and what right we have to pray for them. He believed that he had found a clue to guide him through the maze of this difficult and mysterious subject; but he did not trust his own notion, he wanted to hear what the Church believed. He felt that he should listen to the beautiful Burial Service with more happiness if he understood something of the state of the soul now separated from the decaying flesh. So he went again to the Vicarage, and found Mr. Thorne disengaged.

'Tell me, Mr. Thorne,' he began, 'why you say the happy souls are not in Heaven. Is it not a common remark to speak of them as in Heaven?'

'Common enough,' replied Mr. Thorne, 'but not accurate! Let us consider what we *know* about departed souls. The parable of Dives and Lazarus is our best ground, because it was spoken by the Truth. What do we find there? Where was the soul of Dives after death?'

'In hell!' replied David; 'in torment!'

'And by hell what do you mean?'

'I suppose eternal punishment.'

'Do you not think it rather means Hades, the place of departed spirits; the same hell into which the Creed says that Christ descended?'

'Well, yes, I suppose so,' said David; 'I suppose Christ did not go

into the place of eternal torment, because we are told that He preached to the spirits in prison, which seems to mean souls waiting for something further, to whom preaching might be useful.'

'And we do not know,' added the Vicar, 'that anyone is yet in the actual hell; it is "*prepared* for the devil and his angels." As long as the devils are tempting men on earth, one can hardly say that they are all chained in hell. If the final judgment has not bidden the good to enter Heaven, neither has it yet bidden the wicked to depart into hell. St. Jude says that certain of the angels which kept not their first estate He hath *reserved* in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the Great Day. The two orders are to be given at the same time on the one Great Day.'

'But Dives was in torment,' objected David.

'Yes; the prospect of being cast into hell, or even the doubt as to whether he would be admitted into Heaven, would be torment to a soul.'

'Lazarus was happy.'

'And where was he?' asked the Vicar.

'In Abraham's bosom.'

'Will you tell me what you understand by that expression?'

David had to think a little before he could reply. His vague notion had always been that Dives was in hell and Lazarus in Heaven; but Mr. Thorne was upsetting that idea. If Dives was only waiting his final sentence, so also must Lazarus be only waiting. He said at length: 'I should say that Lazarus was in some place of rest, waiting for the fuller joy of Heaven.'

'Undoubtedly; for Heaven, the vision of God, would hardly be described as "Abraham's bosom;" and also remember that until the final judgment Abraham himself is not in Heaven. But there must be a place of light and peace and refreshment for the blessed dead.'

'For Bessie,' said David in a low tone.

'It could not be,' exclaimed Mr. Thorne, 'that all souls, good and bad, should wait in the same place. Does it seem to you possible that Bessie Langton, and Joseph Sharp, who will probably die to-night, should spend the time of waiting in the same state? Does it not seem to you that through the ages of waiting, our dear ones may grow purer and holier and fitter for the presence of God? A long life of holiness must make a soul more dear to God, and that life of the soul, while waiting for the end, may whiten out every stain on the baptismal robe.'

'But, but,' said David, eagerly, 'the redeemed wash their robes in the Blood of the Lamb.'

'Yes, the only stream that can whiten them; but the process may continue after death. The best of us keep on sinning even on our death-beds; the thorough washing, as it seems to me, cannot take place in this life. What then is the space for, between death and the judgment, but to keep the happy soul in the bosom of Abraham, preparing and waiting for the fulness of joy?'

‘And happy always?’ said David.

‘Happiness always increasing.’

‘But if Lazarus in happiness looks upon Dives in torment, how can he be happy?’

‘Consider the parable,’ replied Mr. Thorne; ‘you know that every incident of every parable and every miracle has a definite meaning. Dives saw Lazarus; did Lazarus see Dives?’

‘I suppose so; it does not say.’

‘You must not suppose what it does not say. Remark, that it is always Abraham who answers Dives; Lazarus is as silent as if he neither saw nor heard. And from this we may conclude that the peace granted to the blessed dead is not disturbed by the sight of suffering.’

So many new ideas had been put into Eaton’s mind that he felt rather lost among them; and though he could not contradict a single remark made by the Vicar, because they were all based on the words of Christ Himself, yet he could not help feeling that the doctrine was unlike what he had hitherto believed. It seemed to him as if Mr. Thorne were going very near the teaching of the Church of Rome. ‘I am afraid,’ said he, ‘that this is very like the doctrine of Purgatory.’

‘I expected that!’ exclaimed Mr. Thorne. ‘I only wonder that you have not made this objection sooner. Now just repeat to me what I have been laying down as the doctrine taught in our Lord’s parable.’

‘That the righteous await in happiness the judgment, and the joy of Heaven; and the wicked await in torment the misery of hell.’

‘And now can you tell me what is the doctrine of Purgatory?’

‘I believe it is this,’ replied David: ‘that every soul, even the best and purest, must suffer torment to render it pure enough for the sight of God.’

‘Yes, that is the theory. And very hard and sad it is to souls which strive after holiness, and say on their death-beds, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” See what strange fancies rise up on this foundation. The Church of Rome declares, as regards certain souls, that they will be delivered from purgatory after so many masses have been said for them; and that on a certain day their torment will be over. Do you not remember reading of the extraordinary statement of the Roman Church, that on one particular day the soul of Cardinal Wiseman was released from purgatory?’

‘I recollect reading it in the newspapers, and thinking it both ridiculous and blasphemous.’

‘All our hearts revolt at such sayings. Can the Church see souls as God sees them, and presume to judge them as He judges them? The Church does know that after humble confession and sincere repentance she can remit the guilt of sins; but it is not in her power to remit the punishment of sins confessed, or to judge for sins which remain unconfessed. So that you see the doctrine of Christ’s parable is not by any means the doctrine of Purgatory.’

‘But one thing remains in my mind,’ said Eaton, as he rose to take his leave: ‘did not our blessed Lord promise an immediate Heaven to the penitent thief?’

‘Reflect a moment,’ said the Vicar. ‘“To-day shalt thou be with Me ——” Where?’

‘In Paradise!’

‘Not in Heaven.’

‘You think that in that case Paradise does not mean Heaven?’

‘Is it possible that it should mean Heaven?’ asked Mr. Thorne. ‘Did our Lord enter Heaven that day?’

‘We have said before that He descended into Hades.’

‘Right,’ replied the Vicar; ‘and you know that He did not ascend into Heaven until the forty-third day after His Crucifixion. Therefore, if the thief was with Christ that day, it is clear that he was not in Heaven. And now I think we have pretty well exhausted the subject, and as I must pay my daily visit to Joseph Sharp, I cannot stay with you any longer.’

‘I am very thankful,’ said David, ‘for what you have taught me. And perhaps if I have anything more to speak of on this subject you will let me come again?’

‘I shall be only too glad.’ Then, as David went off, the Vicar prepared for his pastoral visit to old Sharp.

David was very tired and weary. He soon fell asleep, and awoke in the early morning calm and rested. He dressed himself in black, as he intended to meet the funeral in the churchyard. It was a painful day, but there was comfort in the Burial Service; he felt that there was a sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ. And he knew that this blessed hope filled all the hearts which gathered round the coffin covered with its violet pall, and bearing the sign of the Cross. The Service was hardly sad, only serious; the class whom Bessie had taught at the Sunday School stood near the grave and sang Amen to the prayers; and the sun shone out on them all, and the west wind blew softly, and a lark rose up in an adjoining meadow, and trilled its song as joyfully as if there was no such thing as death in the world. And indeed there is no such thing to the faithful.

In one corner of David’s garden there was a rosery; about a dozen very beautiful standard rose-trees stood in a group, and in the summer this was the spot where he loved best to read his newspaper and smoke his pipe. He was soon doing what seemed almost a cruelty. He was digging round the roots of the most lovely of all the rose-trees; one which bore a profusion of flowers, white, tinted with a soft red colour, and pouring out the most delicious scent. It was all the more cruel to take up this rose now, because it is almost certain that trees transplanted in the spring will die. There were buds on the branches, and he was dooming the poor tree to death. ‘Well,’ said he to himself, ‘if this one dies I will try another in the autumn.’ He carefully arranged all

the roots and fibres so that they should not be torn, and he wrapped a piece of matting round them. When this was done he laid the tree in a shady place. It was then his dinner-hour, and after dinner he had to occupy himself with farm work, and afterwards running to the church for Evensong, was a few minutes late. He still named Bessie Langton in his prayers; but very humbly and cautiously, hardly knowing what to ask for her.

Afterwards David went to Spiller End and had a talk with William Langton; and in the dusk of the evening the two young men carried the beautiful rose-tree to the churchyard, and planted it at the foot of the grave. A white marble cross was to stand at the head, with her name on it, and a verse from Holy Scripture: 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.'

As they walked homewards, David said, 'I am afraid my rose-tree will not live. It is dangerous transplanting it at this time of year. If it dies I will bring another in the autumn.'

'It is certain to die,' said William Langton.

But to David's surprise the little tree did not die. Each time that he went to look at it it seemed stronger, and, as the spring advanced, it put out bright green buds which opened into sprays of leaves, and there were hopes that in the summer it would bear roses on Bessie's grave as it had hitherto borne them in David's garden.

David had so acquired the habit of speaking to Mr. Thorne on matters which he could not easily study for himself, that he did not feel happy unless he could discuss the questions which rose up in his mind and puzzled him. After Bessie's death he continued to pray for her, though he did not feel quite sure that in so doing he was acting according to the teaching of the Church of England. Once more he consulted his priest.

'Am I wrong to pray for her? It is so comforting to do so.'

'I wonder,' said the Vicar, 'if you believe *all* the Articles of the Christian Faith?'

'I think so, I hope so.'

'Then you believe in the communion of saints; that Holy Church has members militant here in earth, and other members entered into rest. Surely one member of the Church may pray for another.'

'But if the doom of the dead is fixed,' began David; but he interrupted himself, and added, 'their doom is not fixed, and even now our prayers may help them.'

'Perhaps you are not aware that prayers for the dead were regularly used by the Jews; and as our Lord while on earth frequented the services of the Temple, He must have heard and joined in those prayers. Yet He never found any fault with them. Amid all His upbraidings of the sayings and doings of the Scribes and Pharisees, He never found fault with that custom.'

'It has often struck me,' said David, 'that in the "Benedicite" we ask the saints to join us in praise. We say, "O Ananias, Azarias, and

Misael, O ye spirits and souls of the righteous, bless ye the Lord, praise Him and magnify Him for ever. ” ”

‘Yes; it is an invocation of saints, an acknowledgment that they can hear us, and join us.’

‘Then it is certain that I may pray God to give dear Bessie light and peace during the season of waiting, and also ask her to join me in praising God.’

‘I believe it to be a practice safe, and comforting, and holy. And I believe that the practice of the great Eastern Church and the great Western Church must be right. If Christ is with His Church even to the end, and if the Spirit of Truth abides with her, then God would not suffer her to exist always in grievous error. Though the Church of England has dropped some holy customs during the last three hundred years, yet she has been saved from the sin of discarding them. And now if they are once more restored by pious and loving hearts, we may be most deeply thankful.’

And deeply thankful David Eaton was to think that he might have this consolation. He did not discuss these matters any more with his priest, but as he studied the Bible more and more carefully, he acquired more faith and more happiness. No Christian can sorrow as those who are without hope; though he had lost the one thing which he most wished for in this life, yet he knew that to Bessie to die was gain, and sorrow became only a calm gravity, while a steady cheerfulness filled his heart as he ordered his life according to the wishes of his mother the Church.

THE THREE BRIDES.

BY CHARLOTTE M. YONGE.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE APPLE OF ATE.

O mirror, mirror on the wall,
Who is the fairest of us all?

The Three Bears.

‘I do really think Terry has found the secret of happiness, for a little while at least,’ said Rosamond, entering Mrs. Poyndsett’s room. ‘That funny little man in the loan museum has asked him to help in the arrangement.’

‘Who is it?’

‘The little watchmaker, or watch cobbler, in the old curiosity shop.’

‘Friskyball?’

‘Yes; Terry calls him a descendant of the Genoese Frescobaldi, and I’m sure his black eyes were never made for an English head. Terry has always haunted those uncanny wares of his, and has pursued them to the museum. “’Tis not every young gentleman I would wish to see there,”

says the old man ; “ but the Honourable Mr. De Lancey has the soul of an antiquarian.” ’

‘ They say the old man is really very clever and well read. ’

‘ He looks like an old magician, with his white cap and spectacles, and he had need to have a wand to bring order out of that awful chaos. Everybody all round has gone and cleared out their rubbish-closet. Upon my word, it looks so. There are pictures all one network of cracks, and iron caps and gauntlets out of all the halls in every stage of rust, and pots and pans and broken crocks, and baskets of coin all verdigris and tarnish !—Pah ! ’

‘ Are Miles’s birds safe ? ’

‘ Oh yes, with a swordfish’s sword and a sawfish’s saw making a trophy on the top. Terry is in the library, hunting material for a dissertation on the ancient unicorn, which ought to conclude with the battle royal, witnessed by Alice in Wonderland. The stuffed department is numerous, but in a bad way as to hair, and chiefly consists of everybody’s grandmothers’ old parrots and squirrels and white rats. Then, every boy, who ever had a fit of birds’ eggs or butterflies, has sent in a collection, chiefly minus the lower wings, and with volunteer specimens of moth ; but luckily some give leave to do what they please with them, so the magician is making composition animals with the *débris*. ’

‘ Not really ! ’

‘ I made a feeble attempt with an admiral’s wings and an orange tip, but I was scouted. About four dilapidated ones make up a proper specimen, and I can’t think how it is all to be done in the time ; but really something fit to be seen is emerging. Terry is sorting the coins, a pretty job I should say ; but felicity to him. But, oh ! the industrial articles ! There are all the regalia, carved out of cherry stones, and a patchwork quilt, of 5,000 bits of silk, each no bigger than a shilling. And a calculation of the middle verse in the Bible, and the longest verse, and the shortest verse, and the like edifying Scripture researches, all copied out like flies’ legs, in writing no one can see but Julius with his spectacles off, and set in a brooch as big as the top of a thimble, all done by a one-legged sergeant of marines. So that the line might not be outdone, I offered my sergeant-major’s banner-screen, but I am sorry to say they declined it, which makes me jealous. ’

‘ Are there any drawings of the Reynolds’ boy ? ’

‘ Yes, Lenore Vivian brought them down, and very good they are. Everyone says he has the making of a genius, but he does not look as if it agreed with him ; he is grown tall, and thin, and white, and I should not wonder if those good-for-nothing servants bullied him. ’

‘ Did you see anything of Eleonora ? ’

‘ Nothing so impossible. I meet her every day, but she is always beset with Strangeways, and I think she avoids me. ’

‘ I can hardly think so. ’

‘ I don’t like it ! That man is always hanging about Sirenwood, and

Lenore never stirs an inch without one of those girls. I wish Frank could see for himself, poor fellow.'

'He does hope to run down next week. I have just heard from him in high spirits. One of his seniors has come into some property, and another is out of health and retires, so there is promotion in view.'

'I wish it would make haste then. I don't like the look of things.'

'I can hardly disbelieve in the dear girl herself; yet I do feel as if it were against nature for it to succeed. Did you hear anything of Mrs. Bowater to-day?'

'Yes, she is much better, and Edith is coming to go into the gallery with me on Tuesday, when they inaugurate the Rat House. Oh! did you hear of the debate about it? You know there's to be a procession—all the volunteers, and all the Odd Fellows, and all the Good Templars, and all the school children of all denominations—whatever can walk behind a flag. Our choir boys grew emulous, and asked Herbert to ask the Rector to let them have our lovely banner with the lilies on it; but he declined, though there's no choice but to give the holiday that will be taken.'

'Was that the debate?'

'Oh no! that was among the higher powers—where the procession should start from. The precedent was an opening that began with going to church, and having a sermon from the Bishop; but then there's no church, and after that spur the Bishop gave them they can't ask him without one; besides, the mayor dissents, and so do a good many more of them. So they are to meet at the Market Cross, and Mr. Fuller, in the famous black gown, supported by Mr. Driver, is to head them. I'm not sure that Julius and Herbert were not in the programme, but Mr. Truelove spoke up, and declared that Mr. Flynn, the Wesleyan Methodist, and Mr. Howler, the Primitive Methodist, and Mr. Riffell, the Baptist, had quite as good a right to walk in the foreground, and to hold forth, and Mr. Moy supported him.'

'Popularity hunting against Raymond.'

'Precisely. But Howler, Flynn and Co. were too much for Mr. Fuller, so he seceded, and the religious ceremonies are now to be confined to his saying grace at the dinner. Raymond thinks it as well, for the inaugural speech would only have been solemn mockery; but Julius thinks it a sad beginning for the place to have no blessing because of our unhappy divisions. Isn't that like Julius?'

'Exactly, though I see it more from Raymond's point of view. So you are going to the dinner?'

'Oh yes. Happily my rector has nothing to say against that, and I am sure he owes me something for keeping me out of the bazaar. In fact, having avoided the trouble, I *couldn't* take the pleasure! and he must set that against the races.'

'My dear, though I am not set against races like Julius, I think, considering his strong feelings on the subject —'

'My dear Mrs. Poyntsett, it would be very bad for Julius to give in to

his fancies. The next thing would be to set baby up in a little hood and veil like a nun !'

Rosamond's winsome nonsense could not but gain a smile. No doubt she was a pleasant daughter-in-law, though for substantial care, Anne was the strength and reliance. Even Anne was much engrossed by preparations for the bazaar. It had been a great perplexity to her that the one thing she thought not worldly should be condemned by Julius, and he had not tried to prevent her from assisting Cecil, thinking, as he had told Eleonora, that the question of right and wrong was not so trenchant as to divide households.

The banquet and inauguration went off fairly well. There was nothing in it worth recording except that Rosamond pronounced that Raymond only wanted a particle of Irish fluency to be a perfect speaker; but everyone was observing how ill and depressed he looked. Even Cecil began to see it herself, and to ask Lady Tyrrell with some anxiety whether she thought him altered.

'Men always look worn after a Session,' said Lady Tyrrell.

'If this really makes him unhappy !'

'My dear Cecil, that's the very proof of the necessity. If it makes him unhappy to go five miles away with his wife, it ought not. You should wean him from such dependence.'

Cecil had tears in her eyes as she said, 'I don't know ! When I hear him sighing in his sleep, I long to give it up and tell him I will try to be happy here.'

'My dear child, don't be weak. If you give way now, you will rue it all your life.'

'If I could have taken to his mother, I think he would have cared more for me.'

'No. The moment her jealousy was excited, she would have resumed him, and you would have been the more shut out in the cold. A little firmness now, and the fresh start is before you.'

Cecil sighed, feeling that she was paying a heavy price for that fresh start, but her hands were too full for much thought. Guests came to dinner, Mrs. Poyntsett kept more to her own room, and Raymond exerted himself to talk so that the blank of the evenings was less apparent. The days were spent at the town hall, where the stalls were raised early enough for all the ladies, their maids and footmen, to buzz about them all day, decking them out.

Mrs. Duncombe was as usual the guiding spirit, contriving all with a cleverness that made the deficiencies of her household the more remarkable. Conny and Bee Strangeways were the best workers, having plenty of experience and resource, and being ready to do anything, however hard, dusty, or disagreeable; and to drudge contentedly with plenty of chatter indeed, but quite as freely to a female as to a male companion; whereas Miss Moy had a knot of men constantly about her, and made a noise which was a sore trial to Cecil's heavy spirit all the first day, ex-

clusive of the offence to her native fastidiousness. She even called upon Lady Tyrrell and Mrs. Duncombe to hold a council whether all gentlemen should not be excluded the next day, as spoiling the ladies' work, and of no use themselves ; but there were one or two who really did toil, and so well, that they could not be dispensed with, and Mrs. Duncombe added that it would not do to give offence.

There was a harassed look about Mrs. Duncombe herself, for much depended on the success of her husband's filly, Dark Hag. The captain had hitherto been cautious, and had secured himself against heavy loss, so as to make the turf a tolerable speculation, but the wonderful perfections of this animal had led him to stake much more on her than had been his wont ; and though his wife was assured of being a rich woman in another week, she was not sorry for the multiplicity of occupations which hindered her mind from dwelling too much on the chances.

'How calm you look, how I envy you !' she said, as she came to borrow some tape of Eleonora Vivian, who was fastening the pendent articles to the drapery of her sister's stall. Eleonora gave a constrained smile, feeling how little truth there was in her apparent peace, wearied out as she was with the long conflict and constant distrust. She was the more anxious to be with Lady Susan, whose every word she could believe, and she finally promised to leave home with Bee and Conny the day after the ball, and to meet their mother in London. They knew there was no chance for Lorimer, but they took her on her own terms, hoping something perhaps, and at any rate glad to be a comfort to one whom they really loved, while Lady Tyrrell was delighted to promote the visit, seeing that the family did more for Lorimer's cause than he did for himself ; and in his own home who could guess the result, especially after certain other manœuvres of her ladyship had taken effect ?

Lady Tyrrell did not know, nor indeed did Conny or Bee, that, though they would meet their mother in London, she would not at once go into Yorkshire with them, but would send them to their uncle's, while she repaired to the retreat at St. Faith's. The harass of these last few weeks, especially the endeavour to make her go to the races, had removed all scruples from Lenore's mind as to leaving her home in ignorance of her intentions. To her mind, the circumstances of her brother's death had made a race-course no place for any of the family, especially that of Backsworth ; gout coming opportunely to disable her father in London, and one or two other little accidents, had prevented the matter from coming to an issue, while she had been in London, and the avowal of her intention to keep away had filled her father with passion at her for her absurd scruples and pretences at being better than other people. It had been Lady Tyrrell who pacified him with assurances that she would soon do better ; no one wished to force her conscience, and Lenore, always on the watch, began to wonder whether her sister had any reason for wishing to keep her away, and longed the more for the house of truth and peace.

So came on the bazaar day, which Mrs. Poyndsett spent in solitude, except for visits from the Rectory, and one from Joanna Bowater, who looked in while Julius was sitting with her, and amused them by her account of herself as an emissary from home with ten pounds to be got rid of from her father and mother for good neighbourhood's sake. She brought Mrs. Poyndsett a beautiful bouquet, for the elderly spinsters, she said, sat on the stairs and kept up a constant supply, and she had also some exquisite Genoese wire ornaments from Cecil's counter, and a set of studs from a tray of polished pebbles sent up from Vivian's favourite lapidary at Rock pier. She had been amused to find the Miss Strangers hunting over it to match that very simple-looking charm which Lena wore on to her watch, for, as she said, 'the attraction must either be the simplicity of it, or the general Lena-worship in which those girls indulge.'

'How does that dear child look?'

'Fagged, I think, but so does everyone, and it was not easy to keep order, Mrs. Duncombe's counter was such a rendezvous for noisy people, and Miss Moy was perfectly dreadful, running about forcing things on people and refusing change.'

'And how is poor Anne enduring?'

'Like Christian in Vanity Fair as long as she did endure, for she retired to the spinsters on the back stairs. I offered to bring her home and she accepted with delight, but I dropped her in the village to bestow her presents. I was determined to come on here; we go on Monday.'

'Shall you be at the Ordination?'

'I trust so. If mamma is pretty well, we shall both go.'

'Is Edith going to the ball on Thursday?'

'No, she has given it up. It seems as if we at least ought to recollect our Ember days, though I am ashamed to think we never did till this time last year.'

'I confess that I never heard of them,' said Mrs. Poyndsett. 'Don't look shocked, my dear, such things were not taught in my time.'

Julius showed her the rubric and the prayer from the book in his pocket, knowing that the one endeared to her by association was one of the Prayer-books made easy by omission of all not needed at the barest Sunday service.

'I see,' she said, 'it seems quite right. I wish you had told me before you were ordained, my dear.'

'You kept your Ember days for me by instinct, dear mother.'

'Don't be too sure, Julius. One learns many things when one is laid on one's back.'

'Think of Herbert now,' whispered Jenny. 'I am glad he is sheltered from all this hubbub by being at the palace. I suppose you cannot go to the Cathedral, Julius?'

'No, Bindon will not come back till his brother's holiday is over, nor do I even know where to write to him. Oh! here comes Anne. Now for her impressions.'

Anne had brought her little gift for Mrs. Poyntsett, and displayed her presents for Glen Fraser, but as to what she had seen, it made her shudder and say 'You were right, Julius, I did not know people could go on so! And with all those poor people ill close by. Miss Slater, who sat on the stairs just below me tying up flowers, is much grieved about a lad who was at work there till a fortnight ago, and now is dying of a fever, and harassed by all the rattling of the carriages.'

'What! close by? Nothing infectious, I hope?'

'The doctor called it gastric fever, but no one was to hear of it lest there should be an alarm; and it was too late to change the place of the bazaar, though it is so sad to have all that gaiety close at hand.'

If these were the impressions of Anne and Joanna early in the day, what were they later, when in those not sustained by excitement spirit and energy began to flag? Cecil's counter, with her excellent and expensive wares, and her own dignified propriety, was far less popular than those where the goods were cheaper and the saleswomen less inaccessible, and she was not only disappointed at her failure, but vexed when told that the articles must be raffled for. She could not object, but it seemed an unworthy end for what had cost her so much money and pains to procure, and it was not pleasant to see Mrs. Duncombe and Miss Moy hawking the tickets about, like regular touters, nor the most beautiful things drawn by the most vulgar and tasteless people.

Miss Moy had around her a court of 'horsey' men who were lounging away the day before the races, and who had excited her spirits to a pitch of boisterousness such as dismayed Mrs. Duncombe herself when her attempts at repression were only laughed at.

Somehow, among these adherents, there arose a proposal for the election of a queen of beauty, each gentleman paying half-a-crown for the right of voting. Miss Moy bridled and tried to blush. She was a tall, highly coloured, flashing-eyed brunette, to whom a triumph would be immense over the refined, statuesque severe Miss Vivian, and an apple-blossom innocent-looking girl who was also present, and though Lady Tyrrell was incontestably the handsomest person in the room, her age and standing had probably prevented her occurring to the propounders of the scheme.

The design was taking shape when young Strangeways, who was willing to exchange chaff with Gussie Moy, but was gentleman enough to feel the indecorum of the whole thing, moved across to his sister, and muttered, 'I say, Con, they are getting up that stupid trick of election of a queen of beauty. Does Lady Tyrrell know it?'

'Wouldn't it be rather fun?'

'Horrid bad form, downright impudence. Mother would squash it at once. Go and warn one of them,' signing with his head.

Constance made her way to Eleonora, who had already been perplexed and angered by more than one critical stare, as one and another man loitered past and gazed intrepidly at her. She hurried at once to her sister,

who was sitting passively behind her counter as if wearied out, and who would not be stirred to interference. 'Never mind, Lenore, it can't be helped. It is all for the cause, and to stop it would be worse taste, fitting on the cap as an acknowledged beauty, and to that I'm not equal.'

'It is an insult.'

'Never fear, they'll never choose you while you look so forbidding, though perhaps it is rather becoming. They have not the taste.'

Eleonora said no more, but went over to the window where Raymond was keeping his guard, with his old-fashioned sense of protection. She had no sooner told him than he started into incredulous indignation, in which he was joined by his wife, who only wished him to dash forward to prevent the scheme before he would believe it real.

However, when the ballot box came his way, and a simpering youth presented him with a card, begging for his opinion, he spoke so as to be heard by all, 'No thank you, sir. I am requested by the ladies present to state that such competition was never contemplated by their committee and would be repugnant to all their sentiments. They beg that the election may be at once dropped and the money returned.'

Mr. Charnock Poyndsett had a weight that no one resisted. There was a moment's silence, a little murmur, apologetic and remonstrant, but the deed was done.

Only a clear voice, with the thrillings of disappointed vanity and exultation scarcely disguised by a laugh was heard, saying louder than the owner knew, 'Oh, of course Mr. Charnock Poyndsett spoiled sport. It would have been awkward between his wife and his old flame.'

'For shame, Gussie,' hushed Mrs. Duncombe, 'they'll hear.'

'I don't care! Let them! Stuck-up people!'

Whoever heard, Cecil Charnock Poyndsett did, and felt as if the ground were giving way with her.

DISOBEDIENT CECIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'MRS. JERNINGHAM'S JOURNAL.'

CHAPTER XVII.

MEANTIME Cecil, hardly believing in her own happiness, was whirled rapidly through the air, in the easy carriage, drawn by the two spirited grey ponies, and driven by her beloved Juliet.

'Is it I?' she cried out, joyously laughing, 'is it really I?'

And she turned her glowing face sparkling all over with delight to her friend, who immediately kissed it. 'That is one advantage of small hats,' said Juliet, 'one can kiss so easily.'

'And so Colonel Wyndham has actually left you?'

'Yes; is it not sad, depressing, miserable? I don't know what to do,

I am Mariana in the Moated Grange with a vengeance ; all this morning I have been only saying that my life was dreary and that he cometh not, and that I am aweary, aweary ; but not that I wished I was dead. I did not get as far as that.'

'Who is Mariana in the Moated Grange, who was in such a distressed plight?' asked Cecil ; 'had her Colonel left her? or what other dreadful thing had happened to her?'

'O poor Cecil, have you read neither Shakespeare nor Tennyson? Why, what is that man made of who owns you? Is his heart made of flint and his mind of butter? Nothing else can account for such cruelty and ignorance ; it is too depraved, it is indeed.'

'I have read Julius Cæsar,' said Cecil laughing, 'and bits of Tennyson that I have got hold of here and there, but I have not done much more than that, I suppose. We are kept so busy at studies that we really have not time for light reading, and Uncle James does not approve of poetry.'

'Poor fellow! why should he? It would be queer if he did, and most Christian, for I am sure poetry does not approve of him. It can't.'

'But I don't know what you will do without Colonel Wyndham. I can't fancy you one bit without him ; it seems unnatural.'

'Yes, and it is unnatural ; and I am sure I can't think either what I shall do. You must take pity on me, Cecil, and let me see as much of you as ever you can.'

'I? O Juliet! you know how happy that would make me. You know there is *nothing* I should enjoy so much ; but how can I? what can I do? Uncle James is always grumpy ; but he is seldom so grumpy as about you.'

Juliet laughed heartily.

'Grumpiness is his normal condition,' she cried. 'Grumpiness is the normal condition of most elderly people, and after all it isn't to be so much wondered at. They *are* to be pitied. It would be a great sell to be elderly.'

'I don't the least see why it should make them grumpy though when it is in the course of nature, and they have always known it is what they must come to, if they don't die ; and nobody wishes to die.'

'Perhaps grumpiness is in the course of nature. The course of nature itself may be grumpy, for anything we know to the contrary, and I am rather disposed to think that it is, and not to blame it either for that matter. It *must* be trying, Cecil. Fancy all our long bright hair growing grey, and wrinkles forming over our smooth little faces, and our nice pretty teeth falling out. I think I should get so angry with my hair and my face, and with my teeth most of all. I don't know what I should do to a tooth that got too old to stay quietly in my head ; and then the next step to being angry with oneself is to become grumpy with one's fellow-creatures. I am sure that is the case, Cecil, and it must be a horrid trial to lose all one's beauty.'

'Yes, if one has any to lose,' said Cecil drily; 'but Uncle James has not.'

'And if he had, perhaps he wouldn't have lost it. That's the only real advantage men have over women, and no stirring of the woman's rights question will change *that*, and so I don't care about the woman's rights question one bit. Men often improve in appearance as they grow old. Women never! Now there's my Colonel, the older he grows, the handsomer he'll be, I know he will. He'll go on at it, getting handsomer and handsomer and handsomer, till at last we shall hardly know what to do with him; and as for me, I shall be a fright!'

Cecil laughed. 'You never can be a fright, Juliet,' she said earnestly.

'What'll you lay?' said Juliet; 'I'll bet you a pony I am. Just you wait. I shall be a fright before I've done with it. You see if I am not!'

'I don't think it much matters after all,' said Cecil; 'it is nice to be pretty, and may help people to love and be fond of one;' here she blushed, thinking of her brother; 'but it is what we *are*, not what we *look*, that really signifies, and that real friends care about.'

'Wait till you're married,' laughed Juliet, 'and you'll find that your husband cares about your looks a precious good deal.'

'I never mean to marry,' replied Cecil, very seriously.

'Oh, don't you?' laughed Juliet. 'I *do* like that;—you never mean to marry. Well, Cecil, with all my whims and fancies, I never took up that one: I always meant to marry when the time came—always.'

'So does Helen,' replied Cecil, calmly; 'but I don't. The thing I most desire in the world, Juliet, is to be free. The foolish thing in women is, that when they can be free they won't. They can't help themselves when they are children and girls, they must be slaves then; but just when they might be free, most of them voluntarily assume a new yoke, and cast their liberty away.'

'But what *are* they to do if they fall in love?' asked Mrs. Wyndham, half laughing, half humbly.

'Oh yes, that is all very well,' answered Cecil with the same lofty calmness; 'but then I never intend to fall in love.'

'But nobody ever intends to fall anywhere, or anyhow,' said Juliet; 'that is just the meaning of *fall*: you do it whether you will or no, you *have* to do it; and then, when you've done it, there is an end of it, and that's why it's called *falling* in love.'

'I am sure one needn't do it unless one chooses, though,' retorted Cecil; 'and I don't choose.'

'And Helen does,' said Mrs. Wyndham. 'And where is Helen? It is almost as strange to see you without her as it would be to meet one of the Siamese twins minus the other.'

'Helen caught cold last night, and is in bed.'

'No! did she? I am sorry for that: she is a little dear. You would be more likely to betray yourself than she would you. I always remember your saying *that* of her, and how you looked it too.'

‘It was the simple truth. We are friends in the highest meaning of the word, and she is true to the backbone.’

‘And a very nice little backbone it is she is true to, I am sure. But, Cecil, don’t you pity me for being left alone? How little one knows when one gets up in the morning what will happen to one before night! If anyone had told me when I was dressing that my Colonel would leave me at noon; and then, when he was off, if I had guessed that we should be driving together now. The very consolation that I should have most desired. How little one knows!’

‘And if anyone had told *me*!’ cried Cecil. ‘I felt quite disconsolate this morning. It seems so ungrateful when I remember how I felt, and to think that this was in store for me all the time.’

‘Now we ought to take advantage of the goods the gods give us. The present good is the opportunity for uninterrupted and confidential conversation, and we ought to make the most of it. Do you remember that there is only one week to the ball? The ball is this day week. Mistress Cecil, do you remember that?’

‘I am not likely to forget it. I think of that ball a great deal, I do assure you—a great deal more than is wise, I am afraid.’

‘I don’t see that. There is nothing for you to do but what is easier than easy. You always go to bed early you’ve told me, so you have only to dress the minute you get upstairs, and then slip out in the way we have planned, and I shall be waiting for you in the carriage at the ivy gate. I shall take care to be early, so that you may find me there, and we will fix the exact time. In such a regular household as yours I suppose you can reckon on the time for anything to a minute.’

‘I should think we could.’

‘Well, every evil brings its attendant good, and even regularity becomes a blessing when it gives us stated times in which we can play tricks with impunity. No doubt the servants all go to bed early?’

‘Directly after prayers.’

‘I thought so—a model household! What else could it be with Mr. Vaux at the top of it? So it appears to me, dear Cecil, that everything acts together for our good. Even this absence of my Colonel may become a circumstance not to be regretted if properly handled. It will be so easy for me to have arranged that I take you to the ball while he is away, and then I didn’t happen to think of mentioning it to him. And the fact that he will have to be at the barracks before I go, so that in any case we should not drive there together, is quite a providential thing. Providence itself seems interfering on our behalf to make everything easy.’

And Mrs. Wyndham spoke the last words through her nose, and cast her eyes up to the sky till the whites were painfully prominent, in imitation of the standard ideal Methodist preacher.

‘I suppose the Colonel won’t be angry?’ said Cecil, too much excited

and charmed as the scheme really began to assume a *probable* air, to care much even if the Colonel *were* angry.

'Bless his heart, what business of his is it?' sang out his wife after the manner of a Gregorian chant. 'Angry? no! what should he understand about it? A big military ball, and one young lady the more or the less, and that one he hardly knows, and who will be dancing away, so that she won't have much to say to *him*. Why should he ever find out that I took you? If he sees us together now and then, it will seem quite natural to him, because he knows we are chums, and he'll never trouble his dear wise old head as to how you come, or why you come, or whom you come with. There you are, and there's an end of it.'

'Yes, I see,' cried Cecil, ecstatically, and far too much excited to inquire into the morality of the matter. 'I see; and oh, Juliet; I do really think it will happen!'

'I should think you did,' answered Juliet. 'Happen! and why shouldn't it? that's all; and why shouldn't it? answer me that, if you can.'

'Well, I really don't know why it shouldn't,' replied Cecil, speaking with thoughtful decision. And so blind was she to the real features of the case, and to her duty, and to the simple questions of right and wrong, truth and falsehood involved, that I really believe she did *not* know.

'I shall chaperone you,' cried Juliet. 'Such glorious fun! I have never chaperoned anybody yet, and to think of my beginning with you, you dear pretty Cecil. Well, at any rate, I sha'n't be ashamed of my young lady, or find any difficulty in getting her partners.'

'Difficulty in getting partners?' cried Cecil, startled. 'What a horrible idea! I should not like to dance at all unless people *wished* to dance with me.'

'No, of course you would not, but there is the very thing: people *will* wish to dance with you, rather, unless I am very much mistaken.'

'If not, pray let them alone,' said Cecil, a little anxiously. 'I am sure you would not do anything else, of course,' she added quite apologetically; 'it is only because you *spoke* of a difficulty in getting partners.'

'Not at all,' retorted Juliet. 'I spoke of *no* difficulty; but don't be alarmed, my proud young damsel; you shall dance only with the true knights who go down on their knees to implore the favour.'

They were driving quickly down the road as they conversed gaily together, and Juliet, looking round her, suddenly exclaimed, 'What fun it would be if we met your Uncle James, and offered him a seat behind; but I have never asked you, Cecil, how it all ended. Did he find us out, and was he as angry as ever he can be? I should like of all things to see him as angry as ever he can be!'

'He was angry enough,' replied Cecil, shaking her head; 'but I suspect he could be more angry still; I don't suppose that he was as angry as ever he could be. He found it all out. He went to Mrs. Lester to inquire for the young lady who met with the accident. They were not

at home, luckily, but the servant said both the young ladies had returned last night with their mamma ; so then he came back in a towering passion to ask who had been imposing on him, and his passion towered more than ever, it was not a tower, it was a pyramid piercing the skies, when he discovered that it was you ; he said——'

Here Cecil paused abruptly, and coloured violently.

'He said. Now, what did he say? Cecil, you must tell me—you must indeed. You have gone too far to retract ; you have, really. Speak out, for tell me you must.'

'I suppose it would not be right?'

'It would be horribly wrong *not*, so it must be right *to*. There can only be a wrong and a right to everything, so that's settled. As if I should mind ! Cecil, you can't suppose I should mind anything he said. I could only laugh, and I like laughing ; moreover, I am determined to be told. Cecil, tell me, if you love me.'

Thus adjured Cecil spoke. What would she not have told if thus adjured ?

'He said you were a very forward young woman.'

'Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha,' laughed Juliet in silvery accent, dropping the reins to clap her hands with delight, but obliged to resume them immediately, as the spirited ponies tossed their heads and quickened their pace, seeming to be quite aware that their mistress was for the moment incapacitated from attending to them.

'Oh, glorious ! oh, delightful !' she exclaimed when she could speak for laughing. 'Dear, dear man ! Verily that uncle of yours is worth cultivating, Cecil. I wish I knew him. I do wish I knew him. I am sure I could take a good many rises out of him ! I am indeed.'

'It is well you can laugh,' replied Cecil, who had not been able to keep from joining in her friend's merriment. 'I was much too angry to smile even when he said it.'

'Keep your wrath for foemen worthy of your steel. It is not worth while being angry with such a creature as that.'

'But to prevent the creature from being angry with me I fear I must go home,' said Cecil.

'Alas ! how quickly all pleasant things come to an end,' cried Mrs. Wyndham, turning her ponies' heads towards Fernly. 'And only fancy now, poor little me going home to my solitary dinner and evening. What shall I do ? what *shall* I do ? O my Colonel, my Colonel !'

'It is very, very hard upon you,' replied Cecil, with sincere and serious compassion.

'You must take pity on me then and come to see me.'

'Ah, Juliet, you know how rejoiced I should be, but how can I ?'

'You must contrive to meet me somewhere to-morrow, at any rate. I won't answer for the consequences unless you do. It is necessary for the

preservation of my health, perhaps of my life. When shall we meet? where shall we meet? how shall we meet? Meet we must, that is settled; that is not the question, but when, where, and how?’

‘Oh, when we walk with Mademoiselle.’

‘Yes, that will do. Come out with her directly after dinner. You school-room creatures dine early of course. Come out before two and walk rapidly towards Me, and something shall be managed if you do.’

‘I am sure we can do that. Uncle James always likes us to walk, and Mademoiselle could not come out to-day, so I am sure she will not venture to refuse to-morrow, and we will be as early as possible.’

‘Do you dine at one?’

‘Yes, we school-room creatures always dine at one when the others have luncheon.’

‘Very well, I shall lunch at one precisely then to-morrow, and let us rush out of our respective houses at the same moment and meet as soon as possible. The point of the road where we meet will show which was in the greatest hurry, started soonest, and walked fastest.’

‘Poor Helen will not be able to come, and I must be alone with Mademoiselle. She will be rather in the way, won’t she?’

Mrs. Wyndham laughed roguishly. ‘Not a bit,’ she cried, still laughing and still looking roguish while she spoke. ‘I know perfectly well how to dispose of Mademoiselle; don’t you, Cecil?’

‘No,’ replied Cecil, reflecting, ‘I don’t; do you? unless we could turn her into a Parisian boot or glove shop, then she would be perfectly happy and contented to stay any length of time; but we have no Parisian boot or glove shops in Byfield.’

‘You really don’t know?’ questioned Juliet, looking hard at her. ‘Very well, I do then; trust me to dispose of Mademoiselle and the result will show whether you have trusted me in vain.’

‘I would trust you always in everything, and I have no doubt you are right now, but still I am puzzled. I confess to being puzzled. I can’t imagine what you mean to do with her or why you look so—so—I had almost said *sly* about it.’

And Cecil laughed at the idea of Juliet looking sly.

‘I *am* sly,’ cried Juliet, laughing also; ‘am uncommonly sly and uncommonly ‘cute too; but it requires no uncommon amount of slyness or ‘cuteness either to see what Mademoiselle is about or what is the best way of using her up, and I must say you are uncommonly *unsly* and *un-‘cute* not to have found out all about it long ago.’

‘All about what?’

‘Ah, that is the very thing. I say, you were never at school, Cecil, were you?’

‘No, never. Uncle James would not send us. I should have liked to go.’

‘That accounts for it. If you had ever been at school you would know as much as I do, but you are an innocent little home maiden. I shall have to put you up to a thing or two, I see that plainly, before you will be fit to be a denizen of any place less unsophisticated than Fernly Manor.’

‘Is Fernly Manor unsophisticated? Then I am sure I like sophisticated places. And here it is in sight, and so very horribly near. Ah, Juliet, it is over, we must part. Why are the pleasant things only episodes and exceptions and the unpleasant ones the real life?’

‘Why is anything what it is?’ answered Juliet. ‘If you begin asking the whys of things you will never come to an end. How I should like to rattle to the front door, all up the avenue, and hand you out to the uncle in style, and just as if our drive was the most common-place and natural thing in the world. Oh, shouldn’t I be a forward young woman then? O Cecil, it was capital of him calling me a forward young woman. Do you know I could forgive him a great number of things for having done that?’

The friends embraced each other most affectionately, and then Cecil sprang from the carriage, and with rapid steps traversed the road which led to the house. It was later than she had thought, time had flown so quickly in Juliet’s presence, and the red light of a fine winter sunset already rendered the snow that lay around her startingly beautiful, and Cecil stopped abruptly before she entered the house with almost a shock of astonishment at the wonderful glory which the roseate tints cast upon the pure white world. ‘Such a world as it might be to live in,’ she sighed to herself, ‘when even rain and cold, both so undesirable in themselves, can make such beauty—make it too by the help of a *departing* sun and all this to be spoiled by the existence of men and women! Why are men and women tiresome? Nature never is; and to be tiresome is almost the worst sin against happiness that can be committed. It is more odd even than it is disagreeable that men and women should be tiresome.’ She ran quickly upstairs while these thoughts flitted through her mind and entered Helen’s room, which looked snug and comfortable, a cheerful fire being in the grate, and Aunt Flora, fair and placid as ever, seated by the invalid’s bedside.

‘O Aunt Flo, I am glad you have been with Helen. I stayed out so much longer than I intended,’ cried Cecil. ‘How is she now?’

‘She has got a heavy cold, but nothing more. She is not a bit feverish, and if she will take a basin of nice gruel with a tea-spoonful of salvolatile in it before she settles off to sleep she will be a great deal better in the morning,’ said Aunt Flora pleasantly.

‘Where *have* you been, Cecil?’ asked Helen, wonderingly. ‘You look so happy and excited. I think you have been caught up by the fairies and have only just come to earth again, and hardly realize that you are there now.’

Cecil laughed gaily.

‘So I have,’ she cried, giving Helen a significant look. ‘I have been in fairyland till five minutes ago.’

Helen guessed the meaning of the words and look.

‘Not really?’ she cried with wonder.

‘O Helen, how silly,’ said Aunt Flora, gently; ‘as if there were really fairies. There are no such foolish things, thank goodness. What *should* we do with fairies? They *would* be so much in the way.’

Cecil took off her hat and gloves, and warmed her hands at the fire.

‘But, Cecil,’ continued her aunt, ‘have you been out all this time, and was Mademoiselle with you?’

‘Mademoiselle would not come, and I went into the garden,’ replied she, rather shortly; ‘and the Miss Lesters joined me there, and—’

‘Oh, the Miss Lesters,’ cried Helen, interested and surprised; ‘and what did they say about last night? But *they* were not the fairies?’ she added, questioningly.

‘No,’ laughed Cecil, ‘certainly *they* were not the fairies. I never heard of a fairy cat; did you?’

‘A fairy cat, my dears? how shocking!’ interrupted Aunt Flora. ‘But still, when one thinks of it, one *has* heard of one. There was the white cat, you know; everybody has heard of the white cat.’

‘And have the Miss Lesters been walking in the garden with you all this time?’ persisted Helen.

‘No; I went part of the way back with them.’

‘Oh, my dear, I hope not,’ said Aunt Flora. ‘I hope you did not go outside the grounds, and then come here by yourself. It is not at all proper; and what would your Uncle James say, if he knew it?’

‘Well, then, I didn’t, Aunt Flora.’

‘Oh, I see how it was,’ continued the placid lady; ‘the Miss Lesters walked back to the gate with you again, and you have been telling each other fairy tales,’ she added quickly, quite triumphant at her own acuteness.

‘Very well, have it so, if you like, Aunt Flo,’ replied Cecil, a little impatiently; ‘only please to remember I did not tell you that.’

‘No, my dear, I guessed it,’ said her aunt, contentedly.

‘Colonel Wyndham has been summoned away by a telegram,’ said Cecil, addressing Helen with significant eyes.

‘No; has he indeed? and how is Diomed?’

‘Diomed!’ cried Cecil, astonished; and then, struck by sudden remorse, she exclaimed, ‘and I never asked! Yes, yes, I *did* ask. She looked so sorry, I thought Diomed was dead; but her answer was that her Colonel had gone away, and from that moment to this I have never thought of Diomed. What a shame!’

‘My dear, who is Diomed?’ asked Aunt Flora, placidly; ‘and who is Diomed’s colonel?’

‘Diomed is a horse,’ replied Cecil, shortly.

‘Oh no, my dear,’ said Aunt Flora, ‘I don’t think Diomed was ever a

horse ; he—or she was it ? I can't remember if he was he or she—was something Roman or Grecian, I daresay, but not a horse. They had centaurs in those days, not regular horses, except perhaps wooden ones. They *had* a wooden horse at the siege of Troy, I remember.'

The girls laughed, and Cecil explained. 'Diomed—at least, the Diomed we are talking about—is a horse of Colonel Wyndham's, Aunt Flora. You did not hear of all the dreadful scrapes we have been getting into, did you ?'

'Dreadful scrapes, my dear ? Oh, I hope not. I do dislike scrapes so very much ; they are not at all nice things for young ladies.'

'Well, we are in them, though ; and so deep in them, I don't see how we are ever to get out again. Mrs. Lester sent us home with Mrs. Wyndham, and she made the coachman gallop the horses down that steep hill with the view on the top of it, and the carriage upset, and Diomed—that's one of their horses—was dreadfully hurt, and we had to walk home here with Mrs. Wyndham, and Uncle James opened the door to us, and took her for Miss Lester ; and he is in a dreadful rage this morning, for he has discovered who it was ; and oh, Aunt Flora, it is all your fault, every bit of it, for not calling on Mrs. Wyndham when we told you ; for if you had, the whole thing would have been quite different and perfectly correct.'

Aunt Flora opened her gentle eyes and little round mouth to the fullest extent that they could be opened. She actually stared, and she actually gasped, but all she said was, 'My dear, you take my breath away.'

At this moment the bell rang for dressing for dinner ; and Aunt Flora's dinner toilette was a thing which under no circumstances did she ever neglect ; so she got up now, and kissed Helen's face as it lay on the pillow.

'I hope you will be much better in the evening,' she said ; 'but I have not understood one word Cecil said, and I only hope there was none of it true, for your papa will be very angry if it is, and dinner is so uncomfortable when he is angry. I do like a comfortable dinner,' added the gentle lady, with a sigh, as she glided out of the room.

'Did you really see her ?' asked Helen, with the utmost eagerness, as the door closed behind her.

'Did I really ? Yes ! See her ? I should think so ! Rather more than see her, Helen. I have been driving with her in her charming pony carriage. Such a drive ! So delicious ! And I am to meet her again to-morrow. And she wishes I could stay with her while her Colonel is away. O Helen, there is no one like her—no one—no one.'

'I am so glad,' cried Helen, all sympathy ; 'and what did she tell you ? anything particular ?'

'Oh yes ; a great deal about the ~~the~~ ^{all}. Just how we can really manage it. It seems quite easy and commonplace ; and, as she said, the Colonel's absence now, and everything else taken into consideration, it is quite providential.'

'I don't know about that,' replied Helen, doubtfully. 'I hardly think things would be providential about balls—do you?'

'Oh, that is a joke; but I don't see one bit why they should not. Helen, I really do now believe that I shall go to this ball—there!' and Cecil faced her with sparkling, triumphant, almost defying eyes.

'I do hope you will,' cried Helen, with all her heart.

'And if we have great big overwhelming happinesses like these, we ought not to mind our small home worries, ought we?' said Cecil, philosophically. 'What *can* Uncle James's nagging signify, if I go to this ball, and meet Juliet every day before it?'

'Suppose he should hear of this drive!'

'He can't hear of it unless he happened to meet the Miss Lesters, and they were so mean as to tell him. *That* they would be, I daresay, but as he was out driving himself with Aunt Flo', his meeting them is an impossibility; so even you need not frighten yourself about that, you poor timid little thing.'

'Well, I am very glad you are safe so far,' said Helen, settling herself comfortably again, for she had started up, in her interest in all that Cecil had to tell her. 'And now there is the bell for school-room tea, and I shall be so glad of a cup, Cecil. I suppose you won't mention your drive to Mademoiselle or Aunt Flora?'

'No, I suppose not; not that I should mind their knowing it, but every person that knows a thing makes it more likely that somebody else will know it; and it would not quite do for Uncle James to become aware of the little fact, would it, Helen?'

'It would cease to be a little fact,' replied she, 'and become a very great and a very troublesome one.'

'And think how different it *might* be,' cried Cecil. 'He might consider it the privilege and favour it really is for me to be taken about by such a woman. He might be planning it for me as the greatest advantage I could have, and thanking her for doing it. Such blindness! Such unpardonable blindness!'

With which words Cecil ran off to her tea, and presently re-appeared by Helen's bedside bringing her a cup, with some dry toast also.

'Juliet wanted me to go and stay with her,' said she as she fed Helen. 'Imagine what life might be but for Uncle James's tyranny! What a dreadful thing a tyrant is, Helen, even in private life, where only the happiness of a few people is concerned; it is sad to think of the misery and disappointment that a tyrant causes. The lives that are blighted by misused power! Is it not terrible? And then, when you go to public life, and think that hundreds upon hundreds suffer—nay, whole countries—I really don't wonder one bit at tyrants being assassinated, do you? It is only the destruction of one to save thousands.'

'Oh, but Cecil—to take life—to assassinate! it is shocking.'

'Of course it is shocking, but other things are more shocking still. It may be worse not to take life than to take it. If amputating your leg

would prevent the rest of your body dying, the surgeon would be an idiot who did not cut it off. One does not feel disgusted with Brutus and the others for stabbing Cæsar.'

'For all that, Cecil, I never *can* think how Brutus ever got over the "Et tu, Brute." I never should have had a happy moment, I know.'

'No, I don't suppose you would,' replied Cecil, half laughing, 'but you are not Brutus.'

'I don't think Julius Cæsar had done anything to deserve death in the first place. He was not a tyrant or cruel. He did not make the people he ruled unhappy, he was only ambitious, and men have a right to be ambitious,' replied Helen.

'If it were so it were a grievous fault,' quoted Cecil.

'And grievously hath Cæsar answered it,' requoted Helen.

'However, it was not only for ambition,' said Cecil; 'it was for tyrannical misrule. His friend, Antony, made it out that it was for ambition, because ambition is not really a grievous fault, but a noble fault; but it was not that, but because he had supported robbers. Brutus says that was why he killed him, and Brutus must know best what he did it for.'

' "What ! shall one of us,
Who struck the foremost man of all the world " '

—(he did not mind his ambition, you see; he rather praises him for it—

' " But for supporting robbers. " '

'That was the real offence—he had supported robbers.'

'Well, I don't think a man ought to be assassinated for supporting robbers.'

'Not a man, perhaps, but a ruler. And, Helen, you say men have a right to be ambitious. Why men only? why not women also?'

'I don't think it is a feminine fault.'

'I don't think it is a fault at all. I think it is a virtue both in men and women.'

'Well,' said Helen, never able to argue long with her cousin. 'I suppose it depends a great deal upon what we consider ambition; there is a good ambition, I daresay, and a bad one, just as there is a proper pride and an improper one. Only even the good ambition seems to me fitter for a man than a woman. And if women feel it, I think it should be *for men*, not for themselves. Now, there is Mrs. Wyndham—she will be ambitious for her Colonel, not for herself.'

Cecil fell into thought at that, and seemed puzzled.

'Yes,' she said at last, 'I suppose so. I can't fancy Juliet ambitious for herself. But then I *think* that is because she has nothing to be ambitious for. She is everything and *has* everything. What room is there for ambition? She is perfect in character and person, and her position is all that a woman can desire. She *can't* be ambitious! Besides which *she* is formed to give delight to herself and to others, and ambition

would somehow seem to be out of place in *her*—it would degrade rather than elevate her.'

'But that I think is what I meant, isn't it? I rather think that must be what I meant, Cecil, about women generally.'

'As if women generally were Juliets!' cried Cecil, with lively indignation.

'No, of course not,' answered Helen, apologetically. 'Of course that *could* not be what I meant. If all women were like *her*, what a world it would be! But more or less it is what women are, and it is what one feels about them; they are made for the purposes you speak of, and not to be ambitious, or to try to attain other things beyond those. Is not that it, Cecil?'

'No, I don't think that is it one bit, Helen,' replied Cecil, stoutly. 'If a woman is like Juliet, and at nineteen is everything and *has* everything that anyone can desire, that particular woman need not be ambitious. And if a man at nineteen, in a man's way, was the same, he need not be ambitious either, need he? I rather think not! But that is no reason why ordinary men and ordinary women should not be ambitious—you and I, Helen, for instance. We are not Juliets—we are not placed as Juliet is—but we have our lives before us, we are intended to do something with these lives, and whatever is highest and best that can be done with them, we ought not to be contented unless we do that. O Helen! don't you see that? say that you see it, Helen.'

'Yes,' said Helen, wearily, and feeling the cold in her head getting uncommonly heavy, 'of course I see it, Cecil.'

Then she closed her eyes, and settling herself on one side, looked as unlike a person who was ambitious, or who felt that ambition was a virtue, as it is possible to imagine. Cecil laughed and gave her a kiss.

'Poor Helen!' she said, 'I don't believe you care about it much after all.'

'Oh yes, indeed I do, Cecil,' replied Helen, sniffing a good deal, and sighing a little.

'Don't talk any more now, you poor little thing,' replied Cecil, laughing. 'Nobody *can* feel very ambitious with a bad cold in their head.'

'No, I really don't think they can, dear Cecil,' replied Helen, submissively.

Then Cecil took a book and sat down by Helen's bedside, where she read very happily till it was time for her to go down to her aunt in the drawing-room. As she rose to leave the room, she perceived that Helen was fast asleep, so she stole out as softly as possible, and then went away into the drawing-room. There she found Aunt Flora alone by the fire, looking the ideal of lady-like comfort, leaning back in an easy-chair, and attired in a soft grey silk, and pretty delicate lace cap, which was her ordinary dinner attire for an evening at home.

A strange feeling of the uselessness of all things—of life and living—seized hold on Cecil as she looked at the pleasant picture before her.

'The same thing over and over and over again ; the school-room upstairs, and Aunt Flora in the drawing-room, and then Uncle James,' and her spirit first sank, and then rose in rebellion against the monotony and uselessness of life.

'Shall I be like Aunt Flora when I am as old ?' she asked herself with a sensation of chill dismay ; and yet she loved her aunt, and with a pang of remorse at the meaning of the thought went forward and kissed her. Her aunt returned the kiss affectionately, but at the same time she arranged her hair and pretty lace cap quite anxiously the next minute. 'And what can it signify how her hair and cap are ?' thought Cecil, with all the insolence of youth.

She sat down on the rug with her knees nearly up to her chin and fell into a reverie.

'I was never allowed to sit in such an attitude as that when I was your age,' said her aunt good-humouredly in her gentle voice and manner.

'No, but your mind was left free,' was the instant retort ; 'my body is unshackled, but my mind is kept in fetters. I think you were the best off of the two, Aunt Flora.'

'I don't know about that, my dear,' replied Aunt Flora, contentedly. 'I suppose we all form our own minds ;' and she looked quite satisfied under the idea that she had formed hers.

'I've had a terrible dinner with your Uncle James,' she continued, settling her flowing silk in becoming folds round her. 'I don't think I shall stay here much longer if it goes on in this way. He is very kind and hospitable in pressing me to remain another month, but it's trying—there is no denying that it is trying.'

'But why was it such a terrible dinner—what was the matter ?'

'That I don't know any more than the tongs,' replied she, designating that useful article of furniture as she spoke ; 'but he is very much out of humour indeed. There is no mincing matters, I must say that he is very much out of humour, and he made me so nervous, even by the way in which he took up or put down his knife and fork, that it will be a wonder if my dinner has not disagreed with me.' And she looked mildly in Cecil's face with an air of injured injury.

'I would not mind him one bit, if I were you,' replied Cecil, consolingly.

'You wouldn't mind him ? Yes, but that is easier said than done. You must mind him if you are dining *tête-à-tête* with him for more than an hour, as I have just been doing. And a very good dinner too,' she added reflectively ; 'the Palestine soup was unusually good, and so were the rice fritters, only I couldn't enjoy myself at all ;' and she gave a deep sigh, feeling keenly the hardness of the position. 'I suppose, Cecil,' she added, 'you don't know what has annoyed your uncle so much ?'

'No, indeed !' replied Cecil ; 'I neither know nor care. There was all that happened last night, which may have put him out. But do you know, Aunt Flo', when people are so cross and ill-humoured, I think

it is much better not to trouble our heads about them. I do, indeed ! Why should the bad temper of one person be allowed to disturb the peace of a household ? We ought not to let our happiness be in the hands of our fellow-creatures so much as that. We ought not to mind Uncle James any more than if he was a naughty child.'

'You couldn't help it if you dined with him, my dear.'

'Then *don't* dine with him. Have your dinner sent upstairs to you to-morrow, and if he asks why, tell him honestly that he is too cross to dine with. That is my notion of how to treat ill-tempered men.'

'Oh, my dear, that would not improve their tempers a bit.'

'I don't *want* to improve their tempers ; I don't care about that. All I think of is preserving my own comfort, not of improving their tempers.'

'Besides which, my dear Cecil, I really don't think you ought to talk about your Uncle James in that way.'

'Oughtn't I ? Then I'm afraid, Aunt Flora, I shall very often have to do what I oughtn't.'

At that moment the door of the room opened, and Mr. Vaux stalked in with a portentous amount of gloom on his brow. Certainly he did not look like an agreeable man to dine with.

Cecil jumped up from her comfortable cosy position on the floor, as she always did when her uncle appeared, and a solemn silence fell on the apartment.

Aunt Flora gave a little nervous cough, and then said with forced cheerfulness, 'What a very nice clear blazing fire !'

'Cecil,' said Mr. Vaux, in a voice that made even Cecil jump, 'if your aunt has not got more important things to talk about, I wish to ask you a few questions.'

Cecil looked up at him with calm attention, and Aunt Flora stammered forth, 'I am sure I hav'n't, dear James.'

He bent his head gravely to her, and then addressed his niece. 'Or perhaps I should not say ask you a few questions, but make a few remarks on your behaviour. I am exceedingly displeased at your leaving these grounds in company with the Miss Lesters, and walking on the high road with them, knowing you would have to return home by yourself.'

'I did not know you objected to my walking with the Miss Lesters.'

'I do *not* object to your walking with the Miss Lesters, if that walk is arranged for you by Mademoiselle or myself ; but I *do* object to your leaving these grounds with *anyone* without either my knowledge or hers.'

'Mademoiselle would not walk with me, sir, and I did get so tired of the terrace.'

'Mademoiselle, I have no doubt, had some good and sufficient reason for not walking with you, and under the circumstances I have no hesitation in saying that you should have either remained in the house or restricted yourself to the garden. But, Cecil, this is not all. The Miss Lesters were unobjectionable companions ; they were companions that you

and I or Mademoiselle herself might have selected for you—nay, would have selected if the opportunity had offered. But what did you do afterwards? Cecil, I am ashamed of you. I grieve to say that I am ashamed of you. You left them to walk with Mrs. Wyndham!’

Cecil coloured violently, and looking extremely angry, replied, ‘No, sir, I did not.’

‘You did not? Nay, Cecil, do not reply to me so. Miss Adela Lester herself is my informant—a young lady whose word no one who has the pleasure of her acquaintance can for a moment doubt.’

‘A mean thing!’ cried Cecil, disdainfully; ‘how I do dislike her for trying to get me into mischief with you; but it was just like her.’

‘You only add to your fault by speaking in this manner of Miss Adela Lester. How could she, with her well-disciplined mind and admirable—ahem!—admirable *behaviour*—yes, *behaviour*; how could she, I ask, imagine for a moment that when you left her in the society of Mrs. Wyndham, it was in the society of a person whom you had no right to know, whom, properly speaking, you do *not* know, and with whom I had especially desired you not to associate. How, I ask, could Miss Adela Lester for a moment imagine this, when she only knew that you had left her in Mrs. Wyndham’s society? And what do you mean by denying it, Cecil?’

‘I don’t deny it.’

‘You don’t deny it? But you *did*. You said you did not walk back with Mrs. Wyndham.’

‘Yes, I did say it, and I do say it, Uncle James; I did not walk home with Mrs. Wyndham; and if Adela Lester told you I did forty times over, I will deny it just the same.’

‘O Cecil,’ said Aunt Flora, ‘it would be so much better not to deny it, and have done with it.’

‘And you mean to tell me, Cecil, that you have not seen Mrs. Wyndham to-day?’

‘No, Uncle James, I have not the slightest intention of telling you that. I mean nothing of the kind, for I did see her.’

‘You did; you confess it.’

‘I don’t confess anything; I don’t see how I could help seeing her if I met her. Adela Lester saw her too; was that an offence on her part needing a confession?’

‘Cecil, you are exceedingly impertinent.’

‘I don’t want to be impertinent, but I can’t help speaking out sometimes. I do consider Mrs. Wyndham such a—such a—very—superior creature’—Cecil paused between her words, hardly knowing how to select any in which she could condescend to praise her friend to one who appreciated her so little as Mr. Vaux—‘that I cannot bear to hear her spoken of as if it was a crime even to see her.’

‘Did you, or did you not, leave Miss Lester’s side in company with Mrs. Wyndham?’

‘Yes, I did ; there ! I don’t want to deceive you. I walked out with the Miss Lesters, because I was tired of being confined in here, and then I met Mrs. Wyndham, and she drove me home.’

‘Very well, very well. Then once for all, once for all, let me tell you that I will have no more of this independence ; no more of this insubordinate conduct. I prohibit your having any intercourse whatever with Mrs. Wyndham. If you meet her anywhere you are to bow coldly, and to pass her by. On no account whatever are you to speak to her. I will not allow it. Do you hear what I say ?’

‘Yes,’ replied Cecil, doggedly, ‘I hear what you say.’

‘Neither will I permit you to walk outside the grounds by yourself, or in company with anyone else, unless you have either my permission or Mademoiselle’s. In laying down these laws for your observance, I am perfectly well aware that they are not new, and that you have this day broken them ; but I now reiterate them, and I have no hesitation in saying that if you disobey me again I shall visit you, Cecil, with my very severest displeasure.’

Cecil remained perfectly silent, and after the pause of a few seconds, Aunt Flora said, rather fretfully, ‘Yes, dear James ; and I am sure Cecil will be very careful in future, and there will be no more of this sort of thing ; and perhaps if Mademoiselle was spoken to, she would make a point of going out with her for regular exercise ; but I never knew a French woman who took regular exercise unless somebody or other made a fuss about it. They hate it, and I believe that is the reason why their complexions are so bad.’

‘If ever and whenever I consider it necessary to speak to Mademoiselle about anything, I will certainly do so, my dear Flora. In the present instance, I have no doubt, no doubt whatever, that she had a good and sufficient reason for her conduct, as I have always found she had for any conduct of hers. I would further remark that I have a great dislike to such expressions as “making a fuss,” and would feel obliged to you if you will abstain from their use ; also, that during a residence of some weeks in Paris, I did not notice that the complexions of French women differed in any marked degree from those of the female inhabitants of other countries, and that I have always considered sweeping and general observations unwise, while condemnations of the same character may be stigmatized as unjust. I will merely add that Mademoiselle’s complexion appears to me to be an exceedingly good one.’ Mr. Vaux began this speech calmly, but had worked himself up to something very nearly resembling anger by the end of it, and the last words were given with considerable irritation.

Aunt Flora replied with fretful eagerness, ‘Oh yes, no doubt, dear James ; I am sure I quite agree with you.’

‘I hope, Cecil,’ said Mr. Vaux—who, having thus annihilated his sister, turned with fresh spirit to his niece—‘I hope, Cecil, that you will carefully note, and obediently carry out, all I have been saying to you.’

Cecil was silent, and Aunt Flora gave her a look and trod on her

foot, and signified to her, in every way she could without detection, to submit and have done with it. But Cecil did not say a word.

‘Your silence, Cecil,’ said her uncle, ‘is, I trust, a proof that you feel how wrong you have been, and are determined to amend your conduct in future. I can hardly imagine any act you could commit more reprehensible than taking a drive with Mrs. Wyndham. I am dumb with amazement.’

Aunt Flora and Cecil both sincerely wished that the dumbness he had alluded to was not merely figurative.

‘Yes, I have no hesitation in saying that I am dumb with amazement when I contemplate it. I don’t tell you to promise to have no more intercourse with the lady on whose husband I have thought fit not to call, and whom I do not select as a fitting companion for you, because I think, and I always have thought, that it is a very undignified proceeding to consider a promise necessary or desirable where an order has been given. The order in itself signifies that obedience must follow it, and a promise tends to throw a doubt on the fact that obedience is implied by the order. You follow me, Cecil?’

‘Certainly, sir, I follow you,’ was the prompt reply, though Cecil gave a little start when thus suddenly called on.

‘Very well, you follow my meaning and will observe it—of that I do not entertain the slightest doubt; but that does not alter the fact that you have done extremely wrong, that you have committed an offence of which no young lady with a well-regulated mind and a correct sense of her duties could; possibly be guilty; and that it is necessary that I should show my cognizance of the fact, and make you remember that you have excited my just displeasure. I request, therefore, that you turn the first twenty pages of Tupper’s *Proverbial Philosophy* into elegant French, and bring it to me at this same hour on next Friday, being this day week, and in order that you may be reminded of your fault and my sense of it, you will retire to your own room half-an-hour earlier than usual every night during that week, which will give you that period of time for the furtherance of your task, and also bring daily to all our minds the knowledge that you are in disgrace. I only regret that Helen is at present laid up with a cold, and therefore the significance of your early retirement is less marked than it would be if your younger companion was left behind.’

Mr. Vaux’s eyes sought the clock.

‘In two minutes, Cecil, the moment for your wishing us good night will have arrived. I recommend that these two minutes are spent by you in meditation on your fault and its punishment, for which salutary purpose your aunt and I will both of us preserve silence till their expiration.’

Of course this speech, spoken with Mr. Vaux’s sternest emphasis, occupied half a minute, and the remaining minute and a half passed in the solemn silence he had recommended. During this time his eyes

never left the clock, and at the end of it he raised his head with dignity.

‘Now, Cecil, you will wish your aunt and myself good night, and I earnestly hope the scheme I have fixed on for the next week will be of all the use in the formation of your character that it ought to be. If you do not profit by it it is entirely your own fault. I punish you only for your good, and I can very honestly assure you that the doing so gives me no pleasure whatever.’

He waved his hands as he spoke, but did not extend one to her in parting salutation, contenting himself with a polite, formal bow.

‘It is only the thought of the moment,’ he said, ‘and I am free to admit that the thought of the moment, even when proceeding from the best regulated minds, may require correction; but as the thought of the moment it occurs to me that to make the whole proceeding more impressive, we will, during this week, when the time for your leaving the room arrives, only exchange bows, and not resume our ordinary family salutes till next Friday. Cecil, I wish you a good night, ushered in by attendance to the task I have given you, and meditation on your fault and my displeasure.’

Cecil lighted the candle, bent her head, and walked quickly and silently out of the room, Aunt Flora murmuring to her as she passed her ‘Good night, dear,’ in such commiserating accents that they put her nearly beside herself. We need scarcely say that every word of Mr. Vaux’s, his command, his displeasure, and his punishments, were gall and wormwood to one who, like Cecil, did not admit any right of his to control her, except the right of custom, and viewed her own submission as only a weak acknowledgment that she had not the strength or the spirit to dispute this right of custom. She shut the door after her and then sat down on the stairs, too angry both with him and herself to be able to go up them in an ordinary manner.

‘And this is my life,’ she cried. ‘This is what I have to bear, and must bear, and do bear! and why? for what reason am I exposed to a tyranny as silly and as illiberal as it is revolting? Why would all ordinary people say that it is right that I should be so treated and condemn me, while they sympathize with my uncle? Why? Why? Only and solely because I am a girl and shall be a woman. That and nothing else gives Uncle James the horrible power over me, and how long will it go on? and when will it end? I am so young. I am only sixteen. It is five years before I shall be twenty-one. For five years he will be able to treat me as he is doing now. It is nonsense for Helen to say that boys are used in the same manner. Even though they are sent to school, they are not in the least in the same state of captivity as I am. They have a few rules that they must obey, and they are put on their honour, and beyond that they have plenty of liberty. They are not slaves, and I am! Besides which, boys, when they are sixteen, are emancipated, or nearly emancipated, from all that. They often enter professions at my age, and

are considered and treated like men, though it is an admitted fact that girls grow up faster and are women, while boys are still only boys. The question is now whether I can go on bearing this tyranny, which it seems will break my spirit, while it certainly destroys all the happiness of my life. It eats into my heart, and will sour me, and make me old before my time. I can't bear it. I won't bear it. I will run away.'

A YORK AND A LANCASTER ROSE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'JANET'S HOME.'

CHAPTER XIV.

A PLAN which had been entertained for sending Claude, Lionel and little Willie to spend the fortnight of the Easter holidays with some cousins living at Ipswich fell through, on account of the Ipswich cousins being so ill-advised as to break out in scarlet fever two or three days before the Ingram boys were to have come to them. Professor Ingram looked very much annoyed when the letter announcing this misfortune arrived one evening when the family were assembled in the drawing-room, but Mrs. Ingram took the news more calmly than she generally did any change of plans.

'I am not sure that I should have liked the three dear boys to have been away for a whole fortnight just now,' she said, looking from her sofa to a far corner of the room where Lionel was playing juggler's tricks with the solitaire balls to Willie's intense admiration. 'You think their noise disturbs me, but you are mistaken. I should miss it if they were to go away; I should indeed.'

This speech was addressed to Professor Ingram and Aunt Rachel, but Rose and Claude both heard it. Rose was sure Claude heard it, though he did not look up from the book he was reading, or remove the hands that were clutched in his hair, for she noticed how still he sat for several minutes afterwards without turning a leaf, and heard the fierce little growl that came from him when, later in the evening, Lionel choked violently over a glass ball that he had let slip too far down his throat, and caused Mamma to start upright on her sofa with her hand on her heart. One might be quite sure that no really disturbing noises would come from Claude, or be allowed in his presence all through the holidays, Rose felt convinced; and there was great comfort in the thought, for Claude could do pretty much as he liked in the school-room and nursery.

A great deal of teasing can, however, go on with very little noise, and the girls had experience of this on the two following mornings, when they wished to settle in earnest to their needlework. The first days of the holiday week—Easter Monday and Tuesday—had been spent partly in going to church with Aunt Rachel, and partly in paying long-promised visits to Grandmamma and Mrs. Fanshaw. On the middle days the

girls expected to make up for lost time, and get a good many hours in the morning for steady work, but they found themselves mistaken in their reckoning. Those days were really the 'tug of war.' All sorts of little things seemed to go against them. The weather was beautifully fine, and the sun shone as brightly as possible, but Nurse was provoking enough to discover that there was a bitter east wind, and to raise the usual objections to doors and windows being left open, or to people sitting on the attic stairs, or in the housemaid's closet, or the shoe-hole, or inside the shower-bath, or any other desirable spot where non-workers might have been coaxed to betake themselves out of the way of the industrious. She even went so far as to accuse Florence and Lionel of having sore throats, though the supposed sufferers (except at meal-time, when they gave in so far as to decline crusts, and accept black-currant jam) stoutly declared that nothing ailed them. Grandmamma Ingram, who was always on the non-coddling side, and generally took the children's view of the weather, on this occasion supported Nurse's opinion of the east wind, by getting a bad attack of bronchitis, and being obliged to send hastily to Aunt Rachel to come home to nurse her; so that there was no further hope of sewing-lessons or support in industry to be looked for from her. Papa, who was to have gone away on a lecturing tour, stayed at home; and, instead of shutting himself in all day, and becoming absorbed in study, he sat with his door ajar, and appeared at it on the slightest possible provocation—hardly what a reasonable person would call a noise—if merely a ball hopped downstairs, or Lionel made a simple attempt at fishing over the banisters with a long piece of pack-thread and a crooked pin, on the chance of a housemaid's cap or Packer's wig attaching itself thereto. What but teasing could be expected under such circumstances from two idle holiday boys disappointed of a pleasant visit, and shut in with five girls all crazy about some new needlework, and stupidly indifferent to more important topics? Even Claude relapsed into old half-forgotten ways of being tiresome, and revived the antiquated joke of pretending to put back his hair with the tips of his fingers before he spoke, in imitation of what Rose thought a particularly pretty gesture of Lucy Fanshaw's, keeping her in perpetual fear lest her friend, who was as sensitive to ridicule as apt to indulge in it at others' expense, should discover she was being mimicked. The squabbles between Lionel and Florence were even more distracting, for there was always a danger, especially when Maggie and Lilly thought good to interfere, of tempers being worked up to a point which would call for interference from upstairs or down before they could be quieted; which might have disagreeable results for everybody. Such unforeseen stupid trifles will give rise to squabbles, too, when minds are prepared by idleness for squabbling. On Friday morning, for example, when Rose and Lucy Fanshaw had just arrived at the interesting point of beginning to run the first tuck in the skirts of the frocks they were making, the peace of the whole party was destroyed for the entire day

by just such a foolish little circumstance as Lionel's chancing to find Willie's old green toad skip-jack in the tray of the school-room inkstand. The morning had promised so well, too, that it was the more provoking to have it spoilt. Rose, who was perhaps always a little hard on Florence, traced back the whole misfortune to Florence's wilfulness in persisting against advice in bringing this same inkstand to the work-table.

'What did one want with ink when one was sewing?' she asked; and though Florence pretended she wanted to draw a pattern of a flowery stitch for the top of the tucks, everybody knew she only thought of it because she liked a pen in her hand better than a needle, and because she was tired of having to measure the depth of her tucks with a card to keep them straight, as Lucy had advised her to do. At the rate the workers were progressing, with all these quarrel interruptions, there seemed so little chance of the most advanced ever being ready for ornamental stitches, that it was really almost provoking to have it talked about.

It must be conceded, however, if quarrels are to be traced back through all their stages of development, that Lionel's attention might never have been called to the skip-jack if Rose had not made such a dead set at Florence for her idleness, that Lionel, who had nothing to do, had some excuse for growing provoked with such very ostentatious industry. Claude had been sent out by his father to change some books at Mudie's Library for his mother, and just as Lionel was preparing to accompany him, when he and Nurse were disputing as to whether or not he should in consideration of his sore throat put on a necktie, there came a message from Mrs. Ingram from her bed, to beg that Lionel would stay at home that morning. She had heard that there was a bitter east wind, and she could not bear the thought of Lionel running a risk of increasing his cold by going out. She had rather do without the books, and have both the boys stay at home to keep each other company. Lionel was ready to burst out in loud complaint at the horrid 'coddling,' and the absurdity of insisting that a fellow's throat was sore when he himself said it was not; but Claude first growled at him, and then whispered something or other in his ear that had the effect of quieting him down in a minute, and making him so meek and civil to Nurse all at once that she proposed of her own accord to let Willie come down to the school-room and keep Master Lionel company till Master Claude got back. She could not, she said, have the babies disturbed from their morning sleep by goings-on in the nursery, but she thought she might trust Lionel to have his little brother with him for an hour or so without their turning the school-room out of the windows. Lionel's strong point, one which in his mother's eyes made up for all deficiencies, was, that next to Rose he was the one among the school-room children with whom the little ones were most at home. Willie adored him and haunted his steps at all possible opportunities, gladly putting up with snubs and an occasional cuff when he was much in the way, for the sake of the delightful times when Lionel was at leisure and willing to play with him.

The first part of that morning had given a golden opportunity to little Willie, and as long as the boys had been content to stay at the oil-clothed end of the school-room near the door, and far from the work-table, and act two sledge-drivers in Norway travelling through a forest and being attacked by wolves, the young ladies were not troubled by their neighbourhood. Lucy Fanshaw might make little disdainful grimaces and express to Rose her surprise that a boy of Lionel's age should care to go on with pretence games, and grow as excited as Willie over shooting down the chair wolves just as they were supposed to be climbing the backs of the sledges, but the sisters took no notice. Pretence games had always been the fashion at the Ingrams'. Perhaps Lionel observed the contemptuous grimaces and did not like them, for his interest in the wolves gradually lessened, and he grew restless; first he put Willie up to wanting more and more chairs for their sledges. The Fräulein's arm-chair was pressed into the service, to the peril of its weak leg; then Maggie and Lilly had to give up their seats and consent to work standing, just till the sledge-drivers had got safe into Tronyem; and then the whole thing was suddenly changed; the chairs were not to be either wolves or sledges, but to be built up into Vogel Island, with a cave, where Rolf (Lionel) was to live till blind old Peder and Oddo the herd-boy came to fetch him away. Willie could be Oddo and climb to the top of Vogel Islet, and some one from the working party must leave her sewing for two minutes and be Peder, and row her down the Fiord in the rocking-chair, which always had been a boat in the holidays since it came into the school-room. Rose was longing to offer to be Blind Peder herself, when an objection struck her: Vogel Islet was very insecurely constructed, and she felt certain it would break down and let Willie through into the cave with a horrible clatter the instant he attempted to land upon it, and what would Papa think of the noise just over his head? She declared rather hastily that the boys were growing tiresome, and that she wished they would keep to their own end of the room and be content with their own chairs. Maggie and Lilly really must have theirs back, and if Willie did not bring them directly she would take them from the bottom of Vogel Islet herself. This imprudent challenge was answered by Lionel and Willie throwing themselves on Rose's chair and trying to drag it from under her, and though Lionel desisted after threats to summon Nurse, he was now really out of humour and bent on being disagreeable. In this mood his eye fell on the old toad skip-jack, a thing which the girls had always hated, and which the Fräulein had confiscated weeks ago and put out of Willie's reach in the school-room inkstand, to save herself and her pupils the annoyance of having it flying into their faces and the crevices of their necks at unexpected moments. When Lionel pounced upon it with a cry of triumph, Rose consoled herself with the hope that the frog had long since lost its jumping powers; she did not know that skip-jacks had lately come into fashion among Lionel's set at school, and that he carried a supply of catgut and shoemaker's wax handy in his pocket to make and

mend them. A short interval of chuckling and whispering between the boys at the far end of the room followed, and then came a shriek from Lucy Fanshaw, into whose neck the frog had jumped. Lucy, unused to skip-jacks, had the imprudence to throw it off as far as she could send it. Willie secured it; it alighted next on Rose's head, and before she could disentangle it from her hair Lionel had it again, and a pitched battle between the Ingram boys and girls began to rage. All scruples about noise were put aside and forgotten as the frog flew here and there, and each time it fell from an insulted face or neck, the wish to secure it on each side was the uppermost and only thought. A screech, such a screech as Florence alone was ever guilty of, brought them all to their senses after a while. What could be the matter? The angry cry rang through the school-room, and as the door stood open must have reached Mamma's bedroom on the same floor, and most likely been heard in Papa's study downstairs. Lionel and Rose both rushed upon Florence to stop her cries, whatever might be their cause, knocking over the chief part of Vogel Islet on to Willie's toes in their dismay, and causing a second disturbance even louder than the first. If Florence were half killed she ought not to make such an outcry in the present state of affairs, and Florence was not even hurt, she was only in one of her states of mind which were two-thirds temper and one-third nervous excitement. After a second shriek she stood speechless, with one hand holding her aching throat to keep back more cries, and the other pointing to the inkstand on the table. This lay on its side, with the frog perched on its uppermost rim, looking as if it meditated a plunge into a black pool of ink wherein Florence's work lay. Rose had only time to seize the grey merino and display the deplorable state it was in before Mamma ran into the room, in her blue dressing-gown, as pale as death, and Papa followed just in time to save her from falling down in a faint among the ruins of Vogel Islet. Nurse Lewis had to be brought from the nursery with sal volatile and burned feathers, and there was a great commotion.

For a long time Mamma could not be persuaded that the dreadful shriek did not mean that someone was seriously hurt, and as Willie had been frightened and slightly bruised by the descent of Vogel Islet on his toes, and was crying a little, she concluded he was the chief sufferer, and would tire herself, even before her breath quite came back, by taking off his shoes and stockings, and rubbing his toes to ascertain that none of them were broken. Papa was naturally very much disgusted when it gradually became clear that nothing had really been injured but a half-made merino frock, and that the whole hubbub was caused by Lionel's teasing ways and Florence's ill-humour. He was very angry with them both, but Mamma putting in a plea for Florence on account of her supposed weak health, the heaviest part of his displeasure fell upon Lionel, who narrowly escaped being sentenced to pass all the remaining mornings of the holidays in the study under the Professor's own eye. If Claude or Rose had, by chance incurred such a sentence, they might not have found

it a very severe punishment, but in this instance the doom looked so dreadful, both for Papa and Lionel, that Rose timidly, and mamma imploringly, ventured at the same moment to put in a word of remonstrance.

'My love,' said Mamma breathlessly, 'I think there are seven more mornings ; you would find it very irksome. The air of the study is stuffy for two people, especially when one of them can't sit very still. I don't know how you would either of you bear it.'

'And Papa,' said Rose, 'I was very nearly as much to blame as Lionel. Would not it do if we all agreed to stay in our own particular homes in different parts of the house till dinner-time? Would you ask Nurse to let us?'

'I have nothing to do with that,' said the Professor, looking a little puzzled, 'but if I don't insist on Lionel's spending the mornings in the study with me, he must distinctly understand that I forbid him to come here or interfere with you or with the children in any way. Whatever else happens, I will not have Mamma startled and disturbed again the first thing in the morning. You hear, Lionel?'

'Yes, sir,' said Lionel, turning away with as much indifference as he dare assume in his father's presence, and pretending to occupy himself entirely in picking up a broken castor and fixing it on to the lame leg of the Fräulein's chair.

Rose noticed the expression on his face as he did this, and felt very sorry. It was the look, among all Lionel's looks, that foretold the worst consequences. Partly obstinate and partly mischievous, for there was actually a smile lurking in the corners of his mouth. It seemed to say : 'Well, if you *will* fuss and fidget, till you have not left me one reasonable way of spending my time that is not forbidden, I'll take it into my own hands and find something to do that will make you wish you had let me alone.'

When Claude came home a quarter of an hour later with the Mudie books, he found the school-room deserted by everybody but Rose, who was disconsolately turning out her drawer, into which the ink had trickled through a crack in the table.

'Where are all the others?,' he asked. 'What's the matter ; you look as glum as possible?'

'A dreadful mess,' said Rose. 'Just look here—did you ever see such ink-stains? And Nurse won't let us have any salts of lemon.'

'Oh, bother,' said Claude ; 'what do I care for those stupid rags? I want to know where the others are. I thought we might have managed a game at something before dinner.'

'My dear, you won't think of such a thing when you hear what has happened,' cried Rose. 'Papa has been in such a way, and we are hardly to look at each other for the rest of the holidays.'

A detailed account of the events of the morning followed, to which Claude listened somewhat contemptuously.

'Just like you all,' he said. 'Just the sort of mess you always do get

into when I'm away; you have none of you any sense. Where is Lionel?'

'Papa has given Lionel something to write out; that would, he said, keep him quiet for the rest of the day. I don't think he would have done that if Lionel had not stood fiddling with a broken castor, and looking—oh, you know how Lionel can look when things are going very wrong, and how quick Papa is to notice it.'

'Florence got nothing to write out, I suppose?'

'No, but Nurse has carried her off into the nursery, and she is to gargle her throat three times a day, and be fussed over. I don't know whether she means to like it or not. I know I should not. As Papa was leaving the room, taking Lionel with him, he turned round and looked at Florence, and asked how old she was, and when she sobbed out ten-and-a-half, he put up his eyebrows and said he was surprised to hear it. I must say I had rather have had a boot thrown at me. I should not have liked Papa to have done it, but it would have been easier to bear. I was sorry for Florence. She could not stop herself crying and sobbing, and Mamma and Nurse settled that her throat was very bad indeed, and that she must be kept quiet in the nursery away from us all, ever such a time. Lucy Fanshaw, however, had a good-natured thought; she slipped away home while we were all being scolded, and came back with an invitation from Mrs. Fanshaw for Maggie and Lilly and me, to bring our work to her house every morning, and she says she will give all the help Aunt Rachel promised, and teach us the difficult stitches.

'Rubbish! you don't want to learn them.'

'Oh, but I do,' cried Rose. 'The others have gone off, not to lose the rest of the morning—but I stayed to talk to you, and see what you thought of the plan. It will keep the house very quiet. We might almost as well, all of us, be doing our lessons.'

'Quite as well, I should say,' grumbled Claude, 'and so might I. Pretty sort of Easter holidays we are having this year. What a shame it is we did not go to Ipswich. Such nonsense about people taking scarlet fever. I am sure I should not, or if I had it would not have been as bad as staying at home, with nothing to do all the mornings, and not even a soul in the school-room to speak to. It's too bad.'

'It would not do you *much* good, would it, if I were to stay away from Mrs. Fanshaw's? I could not be of *much* use to you, you know,' said Rose, wistfully, 'and I should lose all my chance of finishing my work well, and getting the ivory egg.'

'If you want the ivory egg, and mean to go in for nothing but sewing, get it, pray,' answered Claude; 'it's no concern of mine, and I'm sure I don't want to hinder you, only I thought you were above caring for such fiddle-faddle, and were getting to have some sense; and it came into my mind that if your head had not been full of these girl's fads, I would have asked you to sit in the carpenter's shop with me, and we would have had another try to finish that galvanic battery. You used to be very handy

at fitting and glueing, last holidays ; and when I had got the battery to work, I could have tried it on you. You don't mind shocks, you say.'

'Not so very much,' said Rose ; 'only I don't know how I could work if my fingers were twitching, and the glue would be rather bad. I should lose all chance of the egg, and this morning I was feeling so sure of winning it.'

'I'm sure I don't want to hinder you, or to have you in the carpenter's shop, if you don't like to come. I shall get on by myself somehow, I suppose.'

'Walter Papillon,' suggested Rose.

'Papa says we're not to ask fellows to the house just now ; and if I might ask him, he would not come. He says that holidays are for one's home people, and not for fellows one has enough of in the term. He has always got some of his people about with him wherever he goes—little brothers, or something—and if he sees a College fellow, he'd sooner turn down a street to get out of his way than speak to him. He's no good to me in the holidays, and now you're no good. Do as you like, of course, but I must say it is rather a shame.'

The early dinner-bell rang, and Rose, before going upstairs to get ready for dinner, ran to the drawing-room, that she might fortify herself against Claude's grumblings by a loving look at the ivory egg. The hope of getting such a beautiful thing for one's very own, to keep all one's life, was surely enough to excuse one for being—should one say?—a little disobliging to one's brother. No, that sounded bad ; it really was only being a little firm in carrying out one's plans, instead of making them give way before other people's unreasonable requests. One must stand up for oneself sometimes, or nothing would ever be done. The drawing-room was usually empty in the morning, and Rose was surprised to meet Florence coming out hurriedly just as she entered.

'Why, Florence, I thought Mamma told you to stay in the nursery ! How came Nurse to let you down here ?' she cried.

'Nurse has gone to her dinner. Don't stop me,' said Florence, who looked red and queer, and held her hands awkwardly before her, wrapped up in her pinafore.

'You came, as I do, to look at the egg, I suppose ; but, oh ! poor Florence, I'm afraid your chance is gone. I'm so sorry, and I will make Nurse give me the salts of lemon, and do all I can for your things, I promise you.'

'It's no use ; never mind. I don't care what becomes of them. Let me pass,' Florence answered gloomily ; and she ran away without giving Rose a full view of her face even. No wonder ; a person who had been crying as Florence had been crying might well not like to be looked at ; and while still in the sullen stage of remorse and shame, there was no use in trying to comfort her.

The ivory egg had been fixed upright on a velvet cushion under the glass case, and stood open to display its dainty contents. Rose looked

long, but the sight did not give her quite as much pleasure as usual. It might be a grand thing to work with a curious old thimble set in turquoise; it would be something to show to one's friends at working parties all the rest of one's life, but then if one remembered all the time that one's brother had said one was of no use to him! Would not Mary Graham Papillon be happier working with a common thimble, and knowing that her brother thought all the hours of the holidays wasted that were not spent with his own people? How had Mary managed to bring this about? There were lots of little ones in the Papillon household who must be plagues sometimes. What plan could Mary have hit upon to make things go smoothly among them all in that little dark house in the holidays? Rose pondered this problem as she turned her back on the ivory egg and mounted the stairs to her bed-room. Maggie and Lilly had not yet returned from the Fanshaws'; so, after washing her hands and smoothing her hair, she had still a few minutes at her own disposal. Aunt Rachel had asked her to learn by heart, during Lent, the Epistle for Quinquagesima Sunday, which her Sunday scholars, one of whom was Rose Marshall, were to repeat to her on Easter Sunday. Rose Ingram had been ready on the appointed day, but her godmother had not found time to hear her repeat her lesson, and now she thought she would just glance at it again, for fear it should slip from her memory. She had read as far as the verse, 'Charity never faileth; seeketh not her own'—when Maggie and Lilly burst in from Mrs. Fanshaw's, in a great bustle, to get their outdoor clothes taken off, as they were late, and bubbling over with high spirits and excitement.

'So much nicer than working at home, you can't think,' cried Maggie. 'Mrs. Fanshaw is delicious; she has shown me how to pink the trimming for the outdoor cape, so as to make it look just as if a real dressmaker had done it.'

'And when we had been working half an hour she thought we must be hungry,' put in Lilly, 'and she brought out such a nice citron cake, and gave us each a slice, and a tiny glass of cowslip wine, like what we had at her Christmas party, and Lucy handed round chocolate drops twice besides. It is fun, I can tell you, going there for a sewing lesson.'

'Rose will find that out for herself to-morrow,' said Maggie, 'for Mrs. Fanshaw says we may come every day till the work is done; and I know by the twinkle in her eyes when she said sewing is hungry work, that she means to bring out the cake again. You'll see.'

'No, I shan't,' said Rose, sighing; 'Claude wants me to stay at home and help in the finishing of that dreadful old galvanic battery that he has been trying to make so many holidays, and I almost think I shall.'

'Rose! you must be out of your mind to think of such a thing, to sit in Claude's stuffy carpenter's shop instead of going to Mrs. Fanshaw's. And how would your work get on?'

'I could keep it clean, I suppose, if I tried,' said Rose, thoughtfully 'and I should have time between whiles to do all the plain sewing, and

I don't believe Rose Marshall cares a bit for trimmings or ornamental stitches. That was only invented to keep us quiet, and teach us to like sewing. The solid part is all we need do ; and it is hard on the boys to have no fun all the holidays.'

'But the ivory egg!' cried Maggie ; 'you forget that it is to be the reward of beautiful work. You don't mean that you will give up all chance of it to help Claude with his ridiculous old battery that never will be finished, and that would be no use to anyone if it was? Well, you are an idiot!'

The second dinner-bell rang at this moment, and the girls trooped downstairs.

'Seeketh not her own,' Rose said softly to herself, as she followed last with rather a sober face. "'Love seeketh not her own"—things for oneself, that means—rewards as well as other things. Yes, I understand. I shall have to stay at home with Claude, and I must try to make him think I like it best. No, I must *really* like it best. Depend upon it, Mary Graham Papillon *likes* best of all to please her brother, and that is why things go smoothly with them. It must be the best way. "A more excellent way," as the chapter says.'

A WINTER STORY.

XIII.

'Sweet forest odours have their birth,
From the clothed boughs and teeming earth.'

ALFRED STREET.

MR. OLDFIELD walked quickly homewards without speaking a word to Ronald, who was a good deal disappointed at the untimely end put to his hopes of seeing the fox break away, and yet too conscious of something being amiss to venture upon a remonstrance. He did not puzzle his brains with much wonder in the matter, but there had been enough disturbance in his uncle's words and face to enlighten him a little, and he was vexed with Hester for spoiling his amusement.

As they reached the gates they heard voices in the yard, and Mr. Oldfield uttered a word of annoyance. But it was only Rachel speaking to a wild-looking child, of about seven years old, with rough hair and bold black eyes.

'Ye can go along, then, an' tell yer granny as Mr. Oldfield won't have nothin' to say to you,' she was saying in her highest tones. 'Ye've imperence enough down by the Ponds to stock the whole country an' be none the poorer for 't, I'll be boun'; but I won't have you comin' up here, an' that I tell you, once for all, We shall have the rest o' the things goin' after the chestnut mare, this rate.'

Except just keeping out of the reach of Rachel's arms, as if there lay

the means of coercion with which she was best acquainted, the child took no notice whatever of the sharp words. Her eyes wandered restlessly about, quickly observant of all that was to be seen, and caught sight of Mr. Oldfield and Ronald the instant they entered the yard.

'Yer to come to granny,' she said, walking boldly up to him, without a sign of hesitation. 'Her's sent this;' and she handed him a dirty slip of paper, which she had refused to deliver into Mrs. Cæsar's keeping.

'Well, I niver!' said the latter, aghast. 'Mr. Philip, don't ye take he. It's the most rampageous little hussy as I've iver set eyes on. I've telled her a'ready as Watch 'll have to be after her if I catches her again i' th' yard. Ye be off wi' yer, d'ye hear?'

The girl, however, treated Rachel with the utmost indifference. She stood perfectly still, with her keen eyes staring alternately at Mr. Oldfield and Ronald, and showed neither fear nor intention of moving.

'What does your grandmother mean by sending this to me?' asked Mr. Oldfield irritably.

'Yer to come,' repeated the messenger imperturbably.

'What for?'

'Granny said ye was.'

Mr. Oldfield impatiently walked a few steps away. Looking back, he saw the child in the same position, and after a moment's hesitation returned.

'Tell your grandmother I will think of it; but my coming will do your brother, or whatever he may be, no good. Tell her not to expect anything but what the law will give him. Can you recollect this?'

He spoke sharply, tearing the slip of paper into atoms at the same time. Rachel threw up her hands.

'Ye'll niver promise to go down to that nest o' wickedness, Mr. Philip?' she said, coming to him, and speaking in a low, anxious voice. 'Let me send the child home, an' give her her answer.'

Mr. Oldfield repeated his question.

'Do you know what he says?' said Ronald, going a step or two nearer to the child, who was still watching him with her great eyes.

'Yes, I knows—I'm to tell granny yer comin',' she said, only slightly varying her words, and beginning to move slowly towards the gates. But as she sauntered along, suddenly, with the quickness of lightning, she stooped, caught up a stone, and flung it with all her little might at Rachel, darting through the gates the next instant before they had time to think of pursuit. The stone whizzed past Rachel's ear, and crashed into a window behind her. Ben, who was carting away some straw at the end of the yard, looked up at the sound, with his fork and its load arrested midway.

'Run, Ben, run,' cried his wife, 'an' catch her at the corner. Bless the man, leave the straw alone, can't ye? She'll be got away by this time.'

Ronald was already half way across the field. There was a sharp curve in the lane, which by this means he cut off; but as he dashed over the gate, as the quickest means of going through it, he caught sight of the little flying figure well ahead, and it cost him his best running to overtake her on the bridge, and seize her by the shoulder. And then she faced him like a wild cat, scratching and biting until she found the struggle hopeless, when she relaxed as suddenly, and stood doggedly awaiting her fate. But Ronald was not without sympathy for this attack upon Rachel, and he burst out laughing.

‘What did you do that for?’ he said, giving her a slight shake. ‘You’re a little tiger, you are!’

The fear and passion in the child’s eyes changed into an expression of doubt, but she did not answer until Ronald had repeated his question. Then she said, suddenly—

‘Why did her go on at me? I weren’t a hurtin’ she.’

‘Well, she isn’t so bad as she seems,’ said Ronald. ‘And now you’ve broken the window.’

She made another sudden struggle to escape, but the boy was too quick for her.

‘You must stop a moment,’ he said. ‘I’m not hurting you.’

‘I want to go home to my kit,’ she said, with something like a sob. ‘I don’t want to go where Jack’s shut up.’

‘They wouldn’t have a mite like you,’ said Ronald, contemptuously.

‘But they would,’ she said, firing up. ‘Granny said they’d catch me, an’ put me to school, where I wouldn’t ha’ nothin’ t’ eat, nor my kit neither. I wants to go. I won’t throw he again, niver.’

‘That’s all tales to frighten little maids with. I’ll let you go presently. What’s your name?’

‘I’m Jess,’ she said, catching her breath as an ending to her sobs, and staring at him again. ‘Ain’t you a goin’ to beat me, then?’

‘Boys don’t beat girls,’ said Ronald, with some disgust. ‘But don’t you come breaking our windows again.’

‘’Twere she I throwed he at. I niver thought o’ the glass.’

‘If I let you go, will you stop here a little? I want to know where it is you live.’

‘Yes, I’ll stop,’ said Jess, confidently; but the instant the boy removed his hand she was off like a dart, running along the road with extraordinary swiftness. Ronald half started to pursue her, but then he stopped.

‘I’m not going to be seen racing a girl like that,’ he announced, for his own satisfaction. He thrust his hands into his pockets, and walked back, whistling. Nevertheless, the girl’s flight was a disappointment to him. He had taken a good deal of interest in her as a capture of his own—one, moreover, in which he had been able to enact both judge and jury—and her ready promise, and immediate breaking of her word, offended his sense of honour very keenly; so that he was disposed to adopt Rachel’s view of the case until she had inveighed long enough to drive him into

the relief of contradiction ; and from that moment his great aim was to induce his uncle to take him to the Ponds.

Mr. Oldfield suffered a day or two to pass before he reverted to the subject ; and it is probable that either sheer weariness of his own thoughts, or the vague dissatisfaction which was troubling him, drove him to it at last. The truth was that before Hester came he had succeeded in lulling himself into a dreamy contentment with his days of inactivity and morbid introspection, nursing a drearily-grotesque belief that they formed a sort of expiation for the misery he had brought on those he loved. This strange content was shaken. A growing consciousness of weakness stung him at this period, and drove him into actions opposed to the natural bent of his character, as if he found it a necessity to convince himself that his misgivings were unfounded. He had steeled himself to the necessary severity towards Jack Dykes, and the same reason may have led to his resolution to go down to the Ponds. He would have left Ronald behind, but the boy pleaded so eagerly, that he at last consented to his accompanying him.

The fine weather had lasted, so that although the day had not the brightness of that on which they had last gone out together, it was scarcely less beautiful, owing to an infinity of broken lights and shades, full of tenderness and subdued tints. After they had crossed the bridge, and walked about a mile beyond the village, the road branched off, and became a sudden and steep descent through deep sand, and between low underwood of oak and birch, as yet untinged with green, on one side running upwards to a ridge, along which, stretching desolate arms against the sky, stood a row of gaunt sentinel-like fir-trees.

At the foot of this road Mr. Oldfield turned abruptly to the right, and took a path from which the underwood fell back, so that there was an open space of short turf, on which a donkey was grazing ; but presently it closed in again, the oaks and birches grew into large trees, darkened by a mixture of firs, and to the left appeared a strange still sheet of glassy water, heavy with solitude, and reflecting back in green and chestnut shadows the dipping branches on either side, and the whiteness of two swans that sailed through the silence without disturbing it.

There was something so oppressively quiet about the place that Ronald ceased to run, and walked mute by his uncle's side. Great knotted roots struggled across the path, the dead leaves of a dead year rustled under their feet, tall reeds mournfully swayed to and fro. It was not so much the absence of sound that weighed upon you, for sounds there were—for example, this very rustling of the leaves, the occasional cry of a bird, and the rush of a little stream discharging itself with, indeed, a good deal of gurgling clamour into the pond, but the strangeness with which all sounds seemed to be swallowed up by an overpowering silence. It is possible that in summer, when the midges danced in sun shafts between the trees, and wood pigeons filled the elder-scented air with happy cooings, when the grass was green, the water-lilies spread themselves, and feathery

mares-tails formed miniature forests, the spell might have been broken. At this season, however, its depressing influence was both palpable and suggestive of hours when it might be 'yet more weird and gloomy than at present.

A higher pond, presenting the same features and character as the lower, was separated from it by an embankment and narrow meadow, and when once this had been left behind it was almost a relief, although the feeling of solitude remained unbroken, to get into the open and cross a ridge of rough common. Dropping down from this among the trees again Mr. Oldfield and Ronald, by means of some rough planks, forded a small and boggy stream, and found themselves in a little clearing, green with grass, shadowed by two or three giant oaks, and having a few wretched cottages, hardly deserving the name, scattered about in not unpicturesque irregularity.

The place appeared to be deserted except for a child, who for wild unkemptness might have been Jess's sister, and who pointed out the Dykes' cottage, which lay back from the road where it began to rise again, and past a tiny well from which the clearest water was bubbling up.

'Ye can go in to that palin', where the fuzz-chat's sittin',' said the girl, eyeing them curiously, 'an' up through the gard'n.'

It was a poor desolate little garden, in which only one or two of the hardiest flowers had survived the struggle for existence; a few stunted roots had been stuck into a corner with what looked like a childish attempt at adornment, but no further care having been bestowed upon them, they were shrivelling by slow degrees. Some bundles of dry heath lay near the open door, through which an empty kitchen disclosed itself. Mr. Oldfield's knock produced no answer, and he was standing in perplexity when the girl who had directed them called from the road.

'Her's upstairs. Ye can go up if yer minded.'

So bidden, although Mr. Oldfield, as he entered, looked round with instinctive disgust at the squalid roughness of the room, and the blackness of the walls, he no longer hesitated to climb up a dark and narrow staircase, headed by a door, a knock against which brought an immediate command to enter.

The old woman, who lay on a low bed, breathing painfully, and yet with the fire of a life-time in her eyes, turned her head slowly as Mr. Oldfield entered, and evidently aware in an instant who it was, looked hard at him without speaking. It was a little difficult to conceive what mixture of feelings had brought him there, for there was certainly no trace of compassionate impulse in his manner or in his face, which, indeed, might have struck an observer as the harder for the very mobile and almost womanly lines with which his expression seemed in contradiction. Probably the old woman read its language rightly, for her own face—one which still retained much beauty of feature, though set and stern with the tragedies of life—became harsher, and her voice took a ring of defiance.

'So yer come. I've looked for ye these days past.'

'Yes, I'm come, though my coming can do you no good,' said Mr. Oldfield, standing opposite to her.

'Me !' she said, scornfully. 'Leave me alone, I'm past the mendin' or marrin' o' such as you. But ye could help the boy. Don't stan' there shakin' yer head. Ye could, and ye knows it.'

'Your grandson has put himself into the hands of the law, and if I were disposed to let him off, which I tell you plainly I am not, I have not the power.'

The old woman at first appeared to take no notice of his words, although she was looking intently into his face, but she must have heard them, for presently she flung out her hand fiercely and said,

'That's a lie. Ye could do't if ye had the min', but there ain't one o' ye as has a spark o' pity in you. Ye've got yer beast again, what more d'ye want, or what's the worth of a beast to a man's life? Ye'd let my boy rot in jail, ye would, because there ain't none to protect 'im. I can see in yer eyes as ye've a coward's heart, tho' there's somethin' settin' ye up, an' I tell you my curse shall follow you all yer life long—an' the curse o' the dead there ain't any as can take away from you.'

She poured out her words with feeble vehemence, gasping for breath, and her head fell back when they ended, as if death had indeed come to seal them quickly. Ronald, sorely frightened, crept close to his uncle, and looked up in his face. Mr. Oldfield had become deadly pale. His nerves, at all times easily affected, were jarred and shaken almost beyond endurance by these words, which struck the very wound he was ever trying to cover and guard from touch. He had a wild though momentary longing to promise all she asked, if by such a promise he could appease her. There is at times what seems an unaccountable tendency in events to reproduce themselves, and it was of all things horrible to Philip that to the memory of the one death-bed which cast so sombre a gloom upon the past, another laden with a curse should now be added. The old woman, it is probable, understood—by rumour, and the sharp powers of observation belonging to her race—enough of his character to be aware that a threat which appealed to his imagination was the most likely means of influencing him. But the new forces astir in his mind, at this moment chiefly developing themselves in a species of obstinate hardness which, although not actual strength, produced some of its effects, prevented him from yielding to his first impulse. There was little room in his thoughts for more than a whirl of anger, fear, and horror, but it was impossible for one naturally gentle not to attempt something for the relief of the old woman. He took up some drink in a cup by her side and held it to her lips ; she pushed it from him with all her feeble force.

'Go,' she gasped, 'go. I can't breathe wi' ye i' the room. My curse shan't niver leave you, if ye don't get Jack back to me.'

Ronald stumbled down the stairs, longing to reach the fresh sweet air, and shake off the dreary impression of her words, and boy that he was,

they fell away from him as he stood peering into the little bubbling well, by the side of which brown ferns were beginning to uncoil their sheaths. Mr. Oldfield, who came quickly out, passed by without stopping, so that it was a few moments before Ronald overtook him, having quite lost his fright, and only troubled with an idea of its unmanliness.

'Was that Jess's grandmother, Uncle Philip?' he inquired. 'It must be very bad for her to live with such a wicked old woman.'

Mr. Oldfield gave him no answer, but to that Ronald was accustomed. He walked along, whistling cheerily, now and then throwing a stone at a bird, or going off to see where the stream ran from. The solitude was as unbroken as when they came, the broom-makers were probably all absent, one woman watched them from a door, the child who had been their guide followed for a short distance. A few drops of rain began to fall, a chill crept through the air. As they came again from the open tract into the shadow of the trees, the darkness deepened, and the shadows on the glassy water were full of gloom. Mr. Oldfield shivered. His morbid fancy read in it a type of his own sad life. The woman's words, of which another man would have thought only with the compassion they deserved, to him were heavy with actual fate. A sort of wild rage, as alien as possible to his nature, seized him. He hated both himself and the world, feeling as if he must either sink under or defy his burden, while as if he were haunted by the consciousness that the first named was also the most probable of the two alternatives, he seemed to nerve himself with a kind of fictitious strength, so as by the very resoluteness of his walk to prove how much of resistance he could bring forward.

In this mood it is likely that he would have paid little or no attention to a sound of voices, which in so grave a solitude struck strangely on the ear, if Ronald had not called to him to listen. And as they followed a little descent towards the lower pond, it was impossible to avoid seeing what was being enacted before them.

Two or three big boys, with the destructiveness of their kind, were busily engaged in torturing or drowning some unfortunately helpless object which had fallen into their clutches. It presently appeared that this object was a kitten, and that the struggles of its only defender, poor little Jess, were supposed to add very considerably to the amusement of the tormentors. One of the boys was holding her roughly on the bank, while another, creeping along the great arm of a tree which projected far over the still water, was preparing to let the kitten drop, and a third, armed with stones, stood on the grassy embankment so as to cut off the victim's attempt to escape.

At such a sight it would have required a heart of stone not to have at once attempted a rescue. Jess's cries, indeed, were redoubled, directly she saw that some one was at hand, and the wretched kitten added a plaintive chorus of mews.

'Make 'em give me back my kit,' sobbed Jess, piteously: 'Don't let 'em drown her. Her ain't his, her's mine. Oh, my kit, my kit!'

'You boys, what are you about?' said Mr. Oldfield, with his pale face flushing. 'Bring back the cat.'

'Ye can come an' fetch her, if yer minded,' called the boy on the tree, holding up the kitten by its neck with a mocking laugh, and exciting Jess's agony to its highest pitch. But they had not reckoned on Mr. Oldfield's indignation. He was in the tree in a moment, and pushing along the bough. The boy immediately let the kitten drop into the pond, tumbling after it himself, but with a little exertion Mr. Oldfield was able to reach the poor little frightened creature, and draw it up into his arms, although at the moment a stone from the enemies on the bank, with whom Ronald and Jess were waging an unequal warfare, struck him a sharp and blinding blow upon his forehead. Stones continued to be thrown after the boy had scrambled out of the water, and they had all retired to a safe distance. But there was something pathetic in the extreme delight of the child over the recovery of her lost kitten. It was the ugliest shabbiest little creature in the world, and now between terror and wet it looked like a mad thing, meeting all Jess's demonstrations of delight with frantic scratches on her face and arms. But Jess hugged it ecstatically.

'Her's my kit, her is. I niver thowt that Ned were about this way, or I wouldn't ha' brought her.'

'How shall you get home again?' asked Mr. Oldfield, in some perplexity as to the future of the rescued.

'Oh, I'll get round 'em somehow,' said Jess, hopefully. 'There ain't one on 'em can run so fast as me. I'll get kit home. I'll just go 'long a bit o' the way wi' you for a pertence.'

With this diplomatic arrangement Mr. Oldfield was obliged to be satisfied. Jess's only fashion of expressing gratitude was by hugging her kitten, and walking along contentedly by the side of her preserver.

'Did ye see granny?' she asked presently. 'Her's got most too bad to beat me, an' when I've done the chores, kit and me runs out. Her wants Jack drefful. Be ye a goin' to send un back? That's the tree where the barking birds ha' a nest ivery year. Ned dunno nowt about he, but I'll show you if ye'll come by'm by.'

This promise was intended as a farewell. She stood still for a moment, and then, nodding her head, began to clamber up between the knotted roots that stuck out of the sandy soil. Grey clouds were thickly gathering overhead, and a few large drops fell sullenly into the great pond. Doré has wild weird pictures of the old fairy tales, where you see the forest, the gnarled trees, the rugged branches, and some little Hop-o'-my-Thumb braving the darkness out of which these fantastic shapes peer at you. Jess and her impish kitten might have belonged to such a picture. Where do the paths lead? Is the ogre's castle still there, and the good fairy watching to defeat him? Perhaps the kitten was, after all, a fairy in disguise, and if we only waited long enough we might see her blossom out in sweetest fairy fashion.

XIV.

It was a little surprising that an incident so insignificant as that told in the last chapter should have affected Mr. Oldfield so strongly as it did. He did not speak of it, but it dwelt in his mind. It seemed as though even so small an outgoing of sympathy, so slight an effort to reach beyond the usual limit of his interest, had produced disproportionate effects. This very interest, however, was not without its own danger; for owing to the curiously morbid habit of introspection which his mind had acquired, he was beginning to wonder at it himself, and to probe it with a certain pleasure, when, fortunately, another event occurred to quicken it into healthy action.

Among the many quaint and dismantled rooms of the old farm, there was one on the opposite side of the passage to the kitchen, which had gradually accommodated itself to a school-room. It looked into the garden, and beyond the lavender-bushes, and the little path paved with ironstone, to that fairness of blue distance which is almost a distinguishing feature of the county; nor was there a glint of mid-day sun which did not find its way into the room to brighten the dark wood, and give it a warm and cheery look of homeliness, wanting in many other parts of the farm. Mr. Oldfield and Ronald were there one morning at work, Ronald struggling over a Latin translation, while his uncle, leaning back in his chair, with his eyes fixed upon the window, was letting his thoughts wander where the words did not follow them; and Ronald, discovering this happy chance, gabbled on, with the hope of speedily reaching the end, when suddenly, hearing sounds, he jumped up and opened the door.

'Rachel's got hold of somebody,' he said; 'may I see?' And then he cried out, 'It's Jess! Jess! come here!'

Jess indeed it was, pursued round the yard by Rachel, whose wrath was high at having discovered her small enemy peeping in at the door, and who was bent upon summary chastisement for the broken pane of glass. The child, however, showed a marvellous power of avoiding her grasp, and Rachel might have been driven to the ignominy of entreating Long Peter's help, if Ronald's call had not changed the position of affairs. Jess fled towards the sound, and darting by him, rushed into the room where Mr. Oldfield had just risen from his chair. Then, and not till then, she let fall the tattered skirt of the frock she had been clutching, and displayed the kitten, more wretched-looking than ever; and as she stood there, panting for breath, and holding the kitten as tightly as if it represented to her all that was precious in the world, there was something almost tragic in the intensity of the action, and in the piteousness of the two small figures who were the actors.

'Will ye keep kit?' she said, her voice trembling with eagerness. 'They won't let me have her. I've been a hidin' her about, till I dunno where to put her, and she's most clemmed. I'll give her to you for yer

own, if ye'll be good to her,' she added, stretching out the unfortunate kitten in an agony of self-renunciation.

But although she was ready to confide this sacred trust to Mr. Oldfield, she was on the alert to prevent it from falling into the hands of Rachel, whose feelings as she stood at the door were rapidly changing from anger to astonishment. As for Mr. Oldfield himself, his predicament, it must be confessed, had more of the comic than the tragic element about it. The kitten, thus thrust into his arms, had learned to regard the world as its enemy, and betook itself at once to its natural means of defence. Indeed, so thin and miserable was the creature, that it seemed all claws and bristles, and there was a touch of the pathetic in the different estimation set by the giver and the receiver upon the gift itself.

'Her'll git used to you by'm by,' said Jess, drawing a deep breath, and adding quickly as she pointed to Rachel, 'Ye won't let she hurt her, will ye? Ye can beat me if ye will,' she went on, going boldly up to the enemy, 'but kit niver broke no windows, nor nothin', an' her's a very good little cat.'

'Why, bless the child,' said Mrs. Cæsar, completely taken aback, 'nobody's touchin' of ye, is they? Mr. Philip, do ye mean the cat to stop?'

'Yes, it shall stay,' he said compassionately, looking at Jess's poor little wasted face.

'Then I'll go an' get them some'at to eat. They looks half starved the both of 'em,' said Rachel, bustling away.

It was true. As the flush of excitement faded out of her face, Jess was no more than the shadow of the child who had come to the farm a fortnight before. Her features had sharpened and grown pinched, her eyes looked preternaturally large, and there was that unmistakable droop of weakness about the thin limbs which shows illness. But at Rachel's words she looked up sharply.

'Yes, kit an' me's rare an' hungry,' she said. 'Ye see, granny's dyin', an' Ned stops i' the house, an' I couldn't git kit to bide out o't, wi'out I stopped wi' her. I didn't know whativer we was to do. An' I dunno, I can't run so fast as I used.'

'What will Watch say?' said Ronald, trying to stroke the kitten, which only fastened herself more desperately upon Mr. Oldfield's coat. Jess began to laugh.

'Kit ain't afeard o' dogs,' she said, with profound admiration for her favourite's common sense. 'Her can clim' away from they, or—oh, lots o' things! Her'll do.'

But although she had roused herself to amusement at the idea of the kitten's resources being of so limited a nature, she drooped again immediately. It evidently gave her intense pleasure to see the poor little starved creature lap up the food which Rachel gave it quite tenderly and silently; and she herself ate a spoonful or two as if ravenous for it. But it was no more. She looked wistfully at the kitten as if aware that the

moment of separation had arrived, and then went quietly towards the door, not crying, but perhaps already, child as she was, tasting a sorrow too deep for tears.

‘Rachel!’ said Mr. Oldfield, hastily.

‘Yes, Mr. Philip.’

‘We can’t let the child go back to that wretched life.’

Mrs. Cæsar did not immediately answer him. She held the door handle, so that Jess could not pass out, and she stood, alternately contemplating the child and the kitten, which, relaxing a little from its shivering defence, still looked a very weird and goblin-like representative of its race.

‘Besides,’ urged Mr. Oldfield, ‘she is evidently ill.’

‘That’s where ’tis,’ said Rachel, not, however, unkindly. ‘She’s in for somethin’, as any un wi’ half an eye can tell. An’ she’ll take a deal o’ nursin’, and howiver I’m to fin’ time for’t, passes me. Still, Mr. Philip, it wouldn’t be Christian to send her back to that hole, would it?’

‘Then she’ll stay,’ said Ronald joyfully. ‘Jess, do you hear? aren’t you glad?’

He was disappointed that she made no sign of delight beyond turning round, and letting the kitten clamber into her little weary arms. But there was a speechless satisfaction in the movement which really went beyond words.

‘An’ she can sit by the kitchen fire for a bit,’ suggested Rachel; ‘maybe that’ll warm her up.’

But she did not expect her master to follow them there, evidently bent upon seeing with his own eyes that the strange pair had all they needed. They had, in truth, a curious fascination for him, perhaps owing to a stirring in that nobler part of his nature, long choked by sluggish and morbid habits of thought. It was an interest, too, utterly free from associations. Hester’s presence produced too many mingled emotions. Even Ronald, when some occasional likeness to his mother drifted across his face, recalled the old days, and memories which he dreaded. But this child brought with her only new ideas, a pleasant sense of protection, an originality of circumstances; and to his distorted imagination, which persuaded him that fate had shut him out from his fellows, it is not difficult to imagine that even the unconscious trust and confidence of a child might come like a breath of fresh and pure air. It was, indeed, sufficiently evident that Jess looked to him as her protector. Her eyes fastened themselves upon him, and when he sat down beside her, and, with infinite trouble, had coaxed the kitten to remain at least passive in his arms, Jess looked perfectly content.

That sight made Mrs. Cæsar resolve to defend the fugitives from all demands, legal or illegal, which the Ponds people might put forth. When Ben, who was less daring, suggested the possibility of the claim being supported by the police, his wife expressed a supreme contempt for that

'A daddy longlegs would be too much for 'em,' she said scornfully. 'They'm like you, Ben, too big for their brains. Don't talk to me 'bout p'lice. If one of 'em comes here, ye jist send for me, an' I'll settle un in no time.'

Another question troubled Rachel far more practically. The child's clothes were in tatters, and how to provide what she needed at once, it was beyond even her power to suggest.

'She's very little bigger than Finie,' said Ronald. 'Mrs. Claughton would send you some of Finie's things, if I were to ask her.'

Rachel gave an indignant sniff. 'Mrs. Claughton! D'ye think I'm a goin' beggin'?'

Nevertheless, she took the first opportunity of saying to her master,

'Mr. Philip, that child ain't got no clothes, an' I can't get 'em ready all in a minit. They've childern at the pars'nage; I'm thinkin' I'll send down there for what they can spare.'

Everything that Mr. Oldfield did or did not do at this time was contrary to her preconceived notions. It was true that he did not answer her, but she had expected to be forbidden. Presently he said,

'I believe we ought to send for a doctor.'

'I'll try a little kitchen' stuff first,' said Rachel cheerfully. 'I shouldn't wonder if that was to set her up by 'tself.'

So Ronald ran down to the parsonage in great glee as to his errand. It met with quite as warm a response as he had imagined, for not only did Mrs. Claughton's motherly tenderness incite her to send up more than little Jess could want, but Hester and she rejoiced with all the kindness of their hearts over this unlooked-for interest which might work what it seemed impossible for them to effect. Hester had none of that grudging selfishness which is only glad over work done by its own means. Anything which should break upon the dreary stagnation of years; anything which might bring a waft of sweet fresh air to blow upon the heart that had so long wrapped itself in the very grave-clothes of the past, she would thankfully welcome; and perhaps, in comparing these two natures, once so closely drawn together, nothing could be more remarkable than the different manner in which suffering had worked in each, and the result to which it had led. A simple and child-like faith had kept Hester from the waves of bitterness which had swept Philip from his footing, had kept hope green and love patient until they grew into that bountiful royalty which gives of its abundance without expectation of a return.

Mr. Claughton volunteered to go to the Ponds, if possible to see the dying woman, at any rate to account for the child's disappearance, and Ronald ran back, expecting, with boyish hopefulness, to find Jess and her kitten in the yard. There, however, only Watch met him, with a face of doubtful inquiry, for Watch had arrived at the age of steady conservatism, and resented change. Peeping cautiously into the kitchen, he found it empty; but Rachel immediately appeared, and for want of a

better hearer allowed herself to tell him that she had put Jess to bed, and that Mr. Oldfield had ridden to Redmoor for a doctor.

‘What’s the matter with her?’ said Ronald, disappointed.

‘What d’ye suppose the doctor’s comin’ for, wi’out it’s to tell us that? He’ll give it some big name, as ’ll make us all the wiser, but if ye wants to hear the plain English, it’s famishin’ an’ frettin,’ an’ that’s the whole o’t. What did Miss Hester say?’

‘Why do you call her Miss Hester?’ said Ronald. ‘Have you known her so long?’

‘Before you was born, at any rate,’ said Rachel, after a pause.

‘And why doesn’t Uncle Philip like her?’

‘How many more questions is the boy a goin’ to ask! I do b’lieve ye’ve got a clapper insted o’ a tongue in yer head. Do go out, an’ ask Ben to give you somethin’ to do that’ll kep ye out o’ mischief. See there, what a peck o’ mud ye’ve brought in, as if I hadden trouble enough a’ready on my hands. I wish half-a-dozen times a day as there wasn’t no boys in the world to plague one.’

There was no more to be got out of Rachel when she took refuge in a fit of scolding, so Ronald went off to the wood-shed, and worked away very contentedly, quite unmoved by what to Mrs. Cæsar was the crowning wonder of the day, that Mr. Oldfield had himself ridden off on the chestnut mare to fetch the doctor.

They came back together, and—so great was the change which, apparently, a few hours had brought about—Mr. Oldfield began to be sensible of a certain pleasure in the ride, during which, for the first time for many years, he was necessarily thrown into conversation with a man of good sense and intelligence. He would have felt it an impossibility to make the opportunity for himself, but it had been thrust upon him—he would have said by fate—and as his nature could by no crooked twist turn churlish, it became a sort of necessity for him to expand in answer to the light and skilful touch of his companion. The doctor, it must be owned, was moved rather by curiosity than sympathy. Everyone in the neighbourhood had heard something of Mr. Oldfield, and a different version of the causes leading to his long seclusion; it was interesting, if only as a study, to become acquainted with the features of his mind, and thus, perhaps, to track these causes more clearly than could be effected by mere popular rumour. But to do this, it was necessary to make the conversation discursive, by which means Mr. Mayne struck certain veins that yielded unexpected results. Prepared to find a moody and sensitive man, he had no presentiment of the wealth of delicate fancies, still less of the play of something akin to humour, which now and then flashed out. Perhaps they had so long lain hidden that Mr. Oldfield himself derived enjoyment from finding them again within his grasp. It is certain that before they had ridden a mile he had suffered himself to be drawn into a conversation which, whether it might be called animated or not, at all events interested both the talkers.

The doctor, however, soon found that they were theoretical rather than practical subjects by which he could excite his companion's attention. Agriculture, for instance, which, from the occupation he had chosen for his solitude, you might have supposed offered a certain attraction to him, evidently afforded no interest whatever. Nor, when the doctor, judging from the slight account of little Jess which Mr. Oldfield had given him, touched upon philanthropic problems such as were offered by the condition of the Ponds people, could he perceive that Mr. Oldfield suffered any degree of anxiety for the well-being of his neighbours, far less that he would be likely to display active sympathy on their behalf. On the other hand, his interest was keenly alive on the topic of certain psychological studies which Mr. Mayne was putting together in his intervals of leisure, especially as connected with a lunatic asylum in the neighbourhood of Heatherham. He asked numberless questions about the patients, and the delusions to which they were a prey, bringing forward some quaint theories of his own upon that disturbance of balance to which we give the name of madness.

‘What is it after all in these poor creatures,’ he said presently, ‘but an idea which has grown out of proportion, and which they have not the power or the hypocrisy—call it what you will—to keep from the knowledge of their fellows? There is not one of us but shares the folly with them; and therein to me lies the bond that creates so deep an interest between us. They suffer for proclaiming what we keep silent. Why are we not all in madhouses?’

‘Nevertheless,’ said the doctor smiling, ‘there is a difference. You might as well urge that we all should take to our beds and be treated for an epidemic, because the seeds of contagion are about us, and our bodies are so constituted that while one succumbs another resists. It is the mark of a healthy constitution to repel disease, and of a healthy brain to keep its balance.’

‘Say rather,’ persisted Philip, ‘to conceal its waywardness. Would you tell me that you, who, as a medical man, make such matters your especial study, are not persuaded that each person has some particular craze, belonging, perhaps, only to one portion of his life, affecting, perhaps, only one side of his character, but no less, in one point or another, actually disordering his brain? Do you believe yourself, for instance, to be altogether sane?’

‘I do, indeed,’ said Mr. Mayne laughing. ‘But I will acknowledge this much—that the belief may be no proof of my sanity.’

‘I do not expect you to confess it,’ said Philip calmly. ‘I only warn you that cross-examination would reveal to you in one or other dark corner of your mind, an idea which in some distorted shape reigns over a kingdom of its own, and influences all your life.’

‘And I promise you,’ Mr. Mayne said, in a graver tone, ‘that if I find it, I shall not rest until it is dethroned.’

Mr. Oldfield sighed as he answered,

‘That is easily said, but a man must be strong for such work.’

He became thoughtful after these words, answering his companion’s observations briefly, with an evident brooding upon what had been said. The doctor, who, as has been noticed, was chiefly curious to find in him illustrations of his favourite study, made many vain attempts to draw him into further conversation. The man, his nature, his life, and his errand, struck him as strangely contradictory, although he flattered himself that further knowledge would put him in possession of the key to the mystery. Yet, as they rode up together to the old farm, there was nothing in the aspect of the place to assist him in his discoveries. From the tone of Mr. Oldfield’s conversation, the doctor had been led to imagine that he might have been drawn by some romantic twist into his present state of life ; having probably sufficient means to indulge in the sacrifice of the practical to the ideal, and to revel in a kind of indolent idleness. But there was a prosaic bareness about the details, an absence of all the gentle grace you might have looked for, were such the case. No beauty could have been found in the farmyard, in the old house, in the one small fruit tree stiffly nailed against its front. Nay, on a grey and monotonous day, such as that on which Mr. Mayne first saw it, no one could fail to be struck with the unpicturesqueness of its gloom. Neither ivy nor clambering green broke the harsh lines. There was nothing to brighten the keen cold colouring. If there were any charm of homeliness about the place, it clung to the other side, where were the garden, and the cherry-tree, and the low-lying blue hills ; but even these required a breadth of sunshine to light them up, and the doctor was obliged to dismiss his first theory as erroneous, and to turn to his immediate business with little Jess.

He, perhaps, paid a fuller attention to the case than, considering its simplicity, he might otherwise have done, as having interested himself in all the details that surrounded it. The child, he said, was suffering from what was likely to prove an attack of low fever, brought on by want of food and care, but with good nursing he saw no reason why she should not do well. What especially struck him was Mr. Oldfield’s anxiety, and the lighting up of the child’s face when he entered the room. It was another contradiction. On the whole, Mr. Mayne, pleased at finding a subject for his wits to work upon, and not troubled with reproachful sensations at so trying to pierce into the deep recesses of a man’s heart, went away with an agreeable interest awakened in the old farm and its inhabitants, more especially in the particular causes which had influenced its master, and led him out of the ordinary road of life, into paths which seemed both solitary and sad.

PAPERS ON SISTERHOODS.

XVI.—RULE AND CONSTITUTIONS.

WHEN the infant society has chosen its work, begun its joint studies, and methodized the household by the distribution of time and the assignment of duties, it may fitly begin to enforce those regulations of internal discipline which are an integral part of the religious life, one of whose essential distinctions from secular life is the living by and under a fixed *Rule*, whence the term *Regulars* is given to the members of communities of the kind.

To a great extent, a wisely-planned and strictly-enforced time-table, with its due alternations of prayer, silence, study, work, meals, and recreation, will be itself nearly all the Rule that a purely tentative society needs at first; for it is desirable that the Rule should grow, like all the other parts of the organism, unless, indeed, some existing Rule is so good in itself, and so exactly suited to the requirements of the new community, as to be adopted in its entirety, and put at once into operation—a contingency hardly probable.

And here it is time to explain the difference between the Rule of a society and the Constitutions. The Rule, then, is a set of maxims for the guidance of life, prescribing both the inner principles which should govern thoughts, words, and actions; and also the external conduct of members in all such matters as prayers, fasts, dress, meals, conversation, and so forth.

It is not necessary, therefore, to belong to a community in order to keep a Rule. A solitary person may adopt (as hundreds of thousands have done) fixed regulations of religious conduct throughout a long life, without ever entering a society; and a single member of a religious society may, and indeed must, keep the observance of a Rule, so far as is possible, even when separated by some cause or other from all the others.

But Constitutions have to do with the society in so far as it is a corporation; and regulate all such matters as the names, numbers, and duties of office-bearers, the composition of the electoral and legislative body, the quorum of voters necessary to enact or repeal a law, and to choose an officer, the mode of admitting or expelling a member, the authority of the chapter, the rights of daughter-houses, the management and control of property, and all cognate concerns of the whole society.

Constitutions therefore belong to a much later stage than the Rule in the formation of a religious society, and it will be wiser for founders to experiment cautiously before committing the new organism to regulations which may prove inconvenient or even impracticable. It is a much easier thing to settle the Rule, at least tentatively, at the outset.

The Rules of all the ancient orders are practically reducible to three sources, the Rule of St. Basil in the East (still the dominant one in the

Eastern Church), and the Rules of St. Augustine and St. Benedict in the West. When the Crusades gave birth to the Hospitallers and other active Orders, a fresh set of ideas was imported to meet the wants of the new societies, and chief amongst these is the relaxation of the claustral discipline, which secluded, partially or totally, inmates of the elder communities from intercourse with the outer world. The older Rules were gathered by St. Benedict of Aniane in Languedoc, about A.D. 800, into one collection, entitled *Codex Regularum*, which will be found included in the edition of his works forming part of the great *Patrologiæ Cursus Completus* of the Abbé Migne, in which shape it costs only a few shillings. A more elaborate issue of these ancient Rules is that by Lucas Holste or Holstenius, published at Rome in 1661, but now rare and expensive.* These old Rules are well deserving of study by intending founders, as they represent most clearly that ancient theory of the religious life which has been evidently departed from since the Counter-Reformation, and many valuable maxims may be obtained from them. They present very clearly to the student the idea which I am trying to keep prominent in these papers, that a religious house is a family, not a barrack ; is to be ruled by domestic harmony, and not by martial law.

For example, the third chapter of the Rule of St. Benedict obliges the Superior, Abbat or Abbess, to assemble all the community for consultation whenever anything of importance has to be done ; on the ground that even the youngest and most inexperienced member may be able to give useful counsel ; while for minor affairs a cabinet of the senior members is sufficient. This is fundamentally opposed to the regimental view, according to which the Superior issues autocratic orders, which the community has simply to accept and obey unquestioningly, without any discussion whatever ; and it is but one instance out of many which prove the entire divergence of the modern Jesuit theory of the religious life from that of the Saints who first organized it and breathed vitality into its system.

A good Rule will have six qualities : brevity, clearness, practicability, plasticity, permanence, and godliness. It needs to be brief and clear, that it may not task the memories nor puzzle the consciences of those who have to obey it. It needs to be practicable, because a Rule which is exceedingly difficult to keep is certain to be incessantly broken, to the great subversion of order and discipline. It needs to be plastic, that it may leave room for growth, development, and unforeseen contingencies, and avoid the perils of frequent dispensations, practical neglect, or hasty repeal. It should be permanent, for nothing is more hurtful to a society than constant changes of Rule ; which may be compared to the mischief wrought to children's studies by frequent change of teachers and books, or to an invalid by frequent change of physicians and medicines. And

* English versions of the Rule of St. Benedict can be obtained at a low cost from the Church Printing Company, from Mr. Washbourne, or from Messrs. Richardson and Co.

to secure this permanence it should *never*, under any circumstances whatever, be in the power of a Superior to alter the Rule, even in the smallest particular, at her discretion. Special exemptions of individuals from the incidence of minor regulations (such, for example, as the number of services to be attended in chapel, or the length of absence permissible from the house), would naturally and reasonably fall under the head of plasticity, and be within a Superior's competence; but no power of changing one clause of the Rule, far less of enacting new clauses at pleasure, should under any pretext whatever be allowed to a Superior, no matter how minute the particular, nor how judicious the person. For, although obedience is a necessary integer of the Religious Life, it must never be forgotten that this obedience is due primarily to the Rule, and only secondarily to the Superior, as chief of the executive for carrying it out.

Every alteration should require the assent of a clear majority of the chapter, and be introduced only after full deliberation, and a sufficient interval of time between its first proposition and its final enactment to let its bearings be thoroughly canvassed. For, on the one hand, the founders of a society have to remember that if they mean their foundation to last, as little as possible should be trusted to caprice. The Czar Alexander I. remarked truly enough to some one who was lauding his opportunities for good as a benevolent autocrat, 'I am only a happy accident.' His predecessor and his successor alike helped to establish the mischief of a despotism. And, therefore, although the Superior of a religious house at any given time may be not only the best person to be had, but so far above the level of all the other members as to be quite worthy of being entrusted with absolute powers; yet there is no guaranty, nay, there is no probability, of a line of similarly able successors in office. The whole of history can show only two continuous series of monarchs (whether hereditary or elective) whose members sustained without break a high level of capacity; and they are the five Roman emperors from Nerva to Marcus Aurelius inclusive, and the six Grand Moguls from Baber to Aurungzebe; and it would be idle to look for a greater average in the heads of a religious house. The contingency of a weak, a wrong-headed, or a capricious Superior must be guarded against, and there is no guard so safe and permanent as the subordination of the Superior to the Rule. Instead of being held, as it sometimes has been, that the Rule exists only for the members, and not for the head, the principle in a religious house should invariably be that the head is *more* bound than any other person to sedulous observance of the Rule, both as being the first and most responsible official to whom its execution is entrusted, and as being from prominence of station peculiarly liable to affect others by example. In this way, the advent to office of an incompetent Superior is minimized for evil by the permanence of the Rule; whereas, if the Rule could be changed at the whim of the head, the entire dissolution and overthrow of the community would be no improbable event.

An apt parallel is afforded by the manner in which the Book of Common Prayer kept the Church of England from theological disintegration during the long abeyance of spiritual vitality and the continuous appointment of incompetent rulers.

There is a further reason for providing on the one hand for the customary maintenance of a fixed Rule, and on the other for constitutional methods of altering it. This is that in every society two distinct types of opinion are sure to manifest themselves sooner or later: the rigidly conservative and the recklessly innovating. The former will set itself steadily to obstruct and resist any and every improvement which involves change; the latter will pursue novelty at all risks, for the sake of variety and relief from the pressure of routine. Neither temper is consistent with the highest welfare of a community, and the mean between the two can be found only by making change possible, but difficult. Of the two evils, a deeply-rutted groove is less dangerous than an attempt to drive across country where there are no roads at all; and therefore it is expedient to ensure deliberation in changes. This deliberation can be secured in the following manner:—1. By requiring that every proposal shall be put in writing, and a copy furnished to each voter, at least a fortnight before the matter is brought on in chapter. 2. By making a two-thirds majority necessary at the first division. 3. By requiring an equal or greater majority at a second division of the chapter, held at some weeks' interval, after due notice of the suggested change and of the vote already arrived at upon it has been sent to all who are entitled to vote. 4. By admitting proxy papers on behalf of members unable to be present.

These particulars all properly belong to the category of Constitutions, and are inserted here merely to show how the Rule can be most securely guarded from rash and hasty alterations, without being made too inflexible.

Another point of very great practical importance is that there should be *no secrecy* about the Rule. If it be essential to true order and discipline that the Rule should be well weighed, and free from personal caprice, it is not less essential to loyal and willing compliance with it that all the members should know exactly what binds them, and that all candidates should have the whole issue placed clearly before their eyes. Societies in which there is no fixed code at all, but only the variable whim of the Superior's supreme authority; and societies in which the Rule is concealed as a Masonic secret, only to be communicated to those who have been foolhardy enough to take a leap in the dark, are entirely alien from the true spirit of the religious life, and should be condemned and avoided. A lady, who offers herself as a candidate for admission to a religious house, should ask at the outset to be shown the code by which she is to be governed, and if there be no such code producible, or if inspection of it be refused to her, her wisest policy will be to withdraw at once. This is no new principle, for St. Benedict enjoins that the Rule

is to be read over to postulants before admitting them to the Noviciate, and that on three several occasions, with an interval of some months between each, that they may fully know the nature of the obligations they purpose to take upon themselves. Of course, there must be some limits to publicity. In a time of acrid controversy like the present, the opponents of the religious life will often seek and obtain specific information as to the details of the internal customs of communities, with the object of abusing and ridiculing them in secular and polemical newspapers; and therefore there may very well be a clear understanding that copies of the Rule are confidential, and not for publication or general comment. But there should be as little mystery as possible, and everyone whose inquiries are made in good faith had better receive an explicit reply. No caution is so good as having nothing whatever to conceal.

R. F. L.

WOMANKIND.

CHAPTER XXI.

YOUTH AND MAIDEN.

I USE these words because I want some term to express the spirit of that experimental time of life when young people are full of the enjoyment of their mutual attractiveness, and when the whole complexion of their lives depends on the use they make of it, and the effects it produces.

Just as the birds sing and plume themselves in the spring-time, so are young people delightful to one another. There is sometimes the mere enjoyment of lively intercourse; sometimes there is the excitement of a certain amount of preference; sometimes a true, deep friendship is founded; and sometimes the attachment that leads to a union for life then begins.

Friendship can quite exist between persons of different sexes, and of equality in age, but not often, except where there is something that absolutely hinders the friendship from changing into anything else, such as the marriage or engagement of one or both of the friends, or cousinship such as is understood by both to prevent any closer ties. Old acquaintance from early childhood sometimes forms an almost brotherly link, and there are friendships formed by drawing close together over a grave where lies the nearest alike to both. These friendships are, however, of later life. What I am thinking of are those gladsome days when the youth is enchanted to escape from study or business, desk, ship, college, or barrack, to the bright, graceful, and gracious society of ladies; and when the maiden finds her occupations and pleasures brightened and excited by his participation.

All this may be perfectly free, happy, and innocent, and even bene-

ficial to the whole character and nature, especially when amusement is not the only thing in view, but when deeper and graver thoughts are beneath, and enter into the discussion ; but the difficulty is, that there is undoubtedly an excitement in such intercourse, felt more or less by different characters, and apt to produce an unguardedness of manner, and a tendency to say and do what the soberer sense would disapprove.

This capacity of mutual love is of course the cause of the pleasure that it is natural for each sex to take in intercourse with the other, and the curious way in which they regard one another. There is a certain party spirit *en masse* of mankind against womankind, and of women against 'the men ;' but, individually, men are seldom able to judge a woman impartially, and women are far more lenient to a man than to one of themselves. Neither can one sex live satisfactorily in entire separation from the other ; each needs the checks received from the other's presence. Men left to themselves become either morose or coarsely and childishly boisterous ; and women, in the like condition, are apt to harden, to grow childish, and sometimes unrestrained in their talk and habits.

Not that the system now talked of, of sending boys and girls to the same schools, can ever be a good one. The creatures are at an age when a boy's chivalry is not developed, and it is far more likely to awaken at the sight of ladies as a holiday treat than by competition with them at school. The girls' bloom of modesty, too, must be endangered by the mixture with the boys, who will sometimes tyrannize, sometimes torment in a way more distressing and hurtful. Nothing but the direst necessity should ever tolerate mixed schools in villages, and where they cannot be avoided the boys and girls ought to have different playgrounds. Education will do little if modesty and propriety are not most carefully studied in all the adjuncts.

This is, however, aside from the subject, namely, that which might be called 'love in idleness.' It is not quite love, it is rather attraction. Some people have it and feel it, and others are entirely devoid of it. Some baby-girls will be excited till every male being in the room has noticed them. Very few damsels fail to enjoy the delightful exchange of badinage, the play of spirits, the wit on either side, the many skirmishes, and the little adventures, together with the attention they receive, all the more if there be any speciality in it, which begins to deepen the current so sparkling above.

The special temptations of this period are very hard to dwell on without seeming either to make too light of them or to treat them too gravely. The very words for them are hard to find. Coquetry was a foreign word borrowed by our refined grandmothers, when they hardly acknowledged that the thing existed at all. Flirtation was whispered by our mothers, as something too vulgar to be freely spoken even in censure, but the word is now freely flung about with an ease likely to make that which it is meant to express seem blameless. The Italians speak of *far la civetta*,

that is, of laying one's self out for admiration and attention like the little *civetta* owls which make themselves ridiculous by their airs and graces on the roofs of houses in Rome.

This Civetta spirit of absorbing everybody's notice and attention, and feeling wronged by their being paid to anyone else, is a very dangerous one. It is common to laugh at it, and call it mere youthfulness and feminine nature, but it is really the outcome of vanity, and nearly allied to envy and jealousy. A girl who has been used to a monopoly of attention cannot be supposed not to feel neglected and mortified if another should receive what has hitherto been paid to her; indeed sometimes she is absolutely wounded by such desertion, but though the vexation is a real one, she must be careful of the feeling it evokes. A temper of bitterness or dislike to the often perfectly unconscious rival, an inclination to detract from her beauty, or her other merits, or to accuse her of forwardness or flirting, show the beginning of a spirit to be fought with. Perhaps it is not possible that she should appear to you as charming as to those whom she draws away from you; and if she be your friend she may almost appear to you a treacherous supplanter; but such opinions had better not be uttered, you can at the very least resolve to say nothing against her, and you will almost certainly be very thankful that you have held your tongue. If she have any undeniable charm beyond you, beauty, wit, music, cleverness or the like, freely own it, suppressing by force all criticisms, and make the prayer against 'envy, hatred, malice and uncharitableness,' more than ever your own. Even if you know yourself her equal or superior, and think her advantages mere frivolous surface matters, her powers so superficial that you cannot guess how people can be taken in by her, doubt yourself doubly, and strive the more to be both fair and kind towards her. Make it a really religious matter to put away all that tends to envy and jealousy.

Another temptation is that which springs of excitement and pleasure, namely, that of losing self-control and going too far. It is to be observed that there is seldom any restraining power on the other side. In almost all men there is a worse part which makes them willing to incite a girl to go as far as she will with them, and which is flattered at the approaches to indiscretion, which all the time make her forfeit their respect. They want to be amused, and think it the girl's business to take care of herself. If she does what they would not tolerate from their sisters, they still lead her on, and though they do not think better of her, they will defend her when her own sex blame her.

Refinement, modesty, and strict obedience are her best safeguards here, and again these should guard her against that manner which all women instinctively disapprove, but which many men (even good ones) relish because it entertains them. Nothing is a more unfortunate sign in a woman than that she should be better liked by men than by women. We shall often hear it said 'the women were all against her, because she was handsomer, or better bred, or better born, or better dressed.'

No, the women would not have been all against her merely out of jealousy or rivalry, unless there were something objectionable about her. Either she did not bear her advantages meekly, and flaunted them so as to mortify those around her; or else she offended against their good taste and principle. If a woman is truly kind, warmhearted, and affectionate towards her female friends, they are quite ready to be proud of her beauty, grace, or other charms; they will love her heartily if she will let herself be loved by them, and will rejoice in all her successes. It is true that they are severer censors than men are, but in general, if a woman may be allowed to say so, they are much better and less prejudiced judges, since the man—if not personally flattered—has at least a secret belief, half-tender, half-contemptuous, that nothing better can be expected of the sex.

The desire to shine in society is not universal. The wish to please is a feeling implanted by nature; but those are the safest and best who simply do as they would be done by, without attempting to produce an effect. It is only a few who can keep around them a court of admirers, and amuse themselves by playing them off one against another. This power is more apt to be derived from sparkle and vivacity, backed by some advantage of wealth or position, than from beauty alone. Great beauty is a very uncommon gift, and the regularity of feature that constitutes it is not often compatible with quick sensitiveness or great intellect; and transcendent beauties are thus generally tranquil beings, not very easily stirred, and often perfectly simple, and much less desirous to attract than those whose good looks are a more uncertain matter. The great majority of Englishwomen are fair enough to be beautiful in loving eyes, and to have a good deal of prettiness dependent on healthy expression or becoming dress, and there is much more inclination to think about the matter in such cases than in those whose beauty is an acknowledged fact. In the paper on dress, I think it was said that due attention to whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, should make a woman in home and family life wear what is modestly becoming and gives pleasure to her friends; but the instant she begins to dress with the purpose of attracting notice, or outshining others, she errs. Overplainness of attire, with the set purpose of mortifying her own vanity, is a much better extreme—though that has also its subtle dangers.

The girl whose effort it is to excite admiration or sentiment, that may bind one or more men to her service as slaves, and she who is continually putting on caprices, or expressing imperious wants that they may be occupied with her, and who has no serious feeling for them all the time, but is merely playing with them, are both making an evil use of their womanhood, and of their powers of pleasing. One danger in the matter is the habit they are forming. They fancy that when once married all such flirtations will drop off of themselves. Such is sometimes the case, but not always. The habit of receiving homage and exciting admiration, and the enjoyment of creating a kind of excitement by the appearance

of preference, have so engrained themselves that there is no laying them aside, they recur with company manners, and lower the married woman far more than even the girl—disturb family peace—lead her to the verge of evil.

Equally weak and contemptible is the girl who is always imagining love either to or from herself. 'Thinking about lovers,' is universally acknowledged to be a foolish pastime, and though a real contemplation of the subject of love and courtship is needful at times, and when such a matter really comes on, the discussion with sister or friend is quite right and natural; nothing ought to be more avoided than a conclave of silly girls, dwelling on 'their conquests' real or imaginary, expressing hopes, fears, or despairs, and teasing one another about neglects, or flattering each other with repetitions of admiration. It is to be hoped that good education and better kinds of occupations are raising girls out of this depth of folly, but it is well to utter a word of warning, since the pleasure of talking of oneself is always apt to betray one, and there is a certain importance in being supposed to have a lover.

But it should be remembered that grave evils often come from girls, true, right-minded, religious and charitable, and as nice and good as possible in feminine company, giving way to the temptation of making young men their slaves or playfellows. When such young men are the curates of the parish, these habits are very mischievous to the work of their calling. Their heads are turned, their time taken up with amusements and chatter, the charitable occupations that ought to have been properly divided are slurred or neglected, or made occasions of absolute bad example, and even church decoration becomes irreverent. Curates and young ladies have become an absolute stock subject of mockery, and though it is quite true that both are apt to be at an inflammable age, and that human nature is human nature, and that something more real and earnest may be springing up; unguarded folly and excitement is not the way to a blessing, and the girl who enjoys 'turning the head' of a curate, as fair game, does not consider that in her thoughtless levity she may be marring a priest of God. 'He that despiseth you despiseth Me,' is a saying that very few bear in mind in their dealings with clergymen.

But it will be asked, What is to be done? Is a girl to be stiff, prudish, and affected in her relations with men, as if she were afraid of them, and always expecting to be carried too far? No, indeed. That is only another form of the same complaint. Frank, yet quiet, easy manners are the right medium, guarded by the instinct of modesty and propriety, and especially avoiding any putting forth of feelers by way of experiments in power, or the giving such commands to men, young or old, as presuppose a certain devotion to her service.

The whole question how to avoid flirtation, without undue stiffness, resolves itself into old primary rules. To set a watch before the lips, and to examine oneself daily, is the rule laid before every Christian. 'If any

man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, this man's religion is vain,' is quite as true of woman as of man.

If from the time of first serious thought a careful watch has been set to say no word to small or great, young or old, that has not some kind, true, or faithful end in view, if an account is kept of every swerving from these rules, of every lapse into thoughtlessness, negligence, vanity, irreverence, or the like, then without affectation or unkindness, the maiden will preserve herself, or be preserved by heavenly Grace, from the vulgar coarseness of flirtations and coquetries, and be ready in all fair inward purity of spirit, as well as outward purity of body, to give herself in the full dignity of her maidenhood to him whom she really and worthily loves. Or else, she will have a truly virginal spirit, not a merely balked and disappointed one, to turn withal to be the unmarried woman, who careth for the things of the Lord.

(To be continued.)

THE CHARLEMAGNE ROMANCES.

PART III.

ARIOSTO.

It is pleasant, where possible, to gain a little insight into an author's character and habits before beginning to study his works ; it explains his way of thinking. Just as, in the letters of a friend, we recognize in habitual terms of expression the familiar modes of thought—the beaten mental tracks, so to speak, of the man we know, so we should like to recognize an author in his books. It is but little of this kind that we learn of Ariosto ; but that little is significant. We hear of a youth born to be a poet as a skylark is born to sing, but trained perforce to be a lawyer ; spending his days over law-books and parchments, but his nights over the classic authors. It was not until after five years had been passed by the young man in not too productive study as an advocate, that his father gave up the vain attempt to train a young forest tree into an espalier, and allowed his ill-understood son to take his own course—and so transmitted his own name to posterity ' because he was the father of Ludovico.'

But the young poet had not yet escaped all the dangers which threatened to cramp his genius. The time was scarcely come when the tongue used for the daily business of life was supposed to be a fitting vehicle for lofty thoughts also. Despite the example of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, the scholars of the day clung to the language of Virgil and Horace. So Ariosto began to compose poems in Latin.

But the stately fetters irked him. His wild muse required greater freedom than she could find anywhere save in her flexible mother tongue.

Then he tried Italian comedy upon the Latin model; but that did not succeed either. Not satisfied with his experiment, however, he began to speak of writing a poem on the Romance-Wars of Charlemagne in the Italian language. Then the critics took fright. 'Latin,' said Bembo to him, 'is the only tongue worthy the dignity of the epic.' 'Aye,' replied Ariosto, 'but it is better to be amongst the first rank of Italian, than not even in the second of Latin poets.'

Having arrived at this conviction, Ariosto shook off all conventional shackles, flung the 'Unities' to the winds, and gave free rein to the most frolicsome fancy that ever sported amidst the wild myths of the middle ages, or tickled grave critic into a mixture of mirth and bewilderment as hopeless as despair.

But he was not free to follow his own inclinations long, for his father died when he was only twenty-four years of age, and then he was obliged, as he says, to turn 'his thoughts from Mary's, back to Martha's part—provide for the household, cherish his mother, find husbands and dowers too for his sisters, and educate his little brothers, and yet not hurt the family heritage.' The smallness of this family heritage induced him to accept an offer to become First Gentleman at the Court of Cardinal Ippolito of Este, a post which entailed the expenditure of much time in return for a not too ample salary. Moreover the Cardinal had so little taste for poetry that his comment on the first cantos of the *Orlando Furioso* is said to have been, 'Where have you managed to find so many absurdities?'

Alfonso Duke of Ferrara had, however, a greater capability of appreciating the poet than his brother; and when Ippolito quarrelled with Ariosto he took him into his own service, sent him on delicate and difficult missions, and appointed him to be Governor of the Gazfagnana, a turbulent district in the Apennines.

Nothing can be a better proof of the widespread popularity of the poet than an anecdote, possibly true, which is related of him during his residence here. It is said that one day, walking dreamily in the forest, as was his wont, he found himself suddenly surrounded by a band of brigands. But one of the party recognizing him for the poet-governor, the captain apologized most courteously, that not having recognized him earlier they had not received him with the honour due to so distinguished a personage; and he escorted Ariosto home in perfect safety.

The poet appears to have been a man of an affectionate and easy disposition, very simple in his tastes and habits, and very absent and dreamy. His family used to make a joke of his absence of mind at table, for he was as likely to consume the food set before another person as that which was placed upon his own plate. He says of himself, that he ought to have lived in the days when men fed on acorns, so indifferent was he as to what he ate and drank.

He appears to have spent the latter part of his life in a manner more congenial to his tastes and pursuits than that portion of it which was passed at Ippolito's court, for he built himself a pretty little house at

Ferrara, and in its pleasant garden he used to spend much of his time, enjoying the literary leisure which had come to him at last.

He was, like many men of his time, very lax in his moral relations. He says of himself, that he was always in love; but there was no one lady like the Laura of Petrarch, or the Beatrice of Dante, to whom he dedicated his especial homage; though he makes honourable mention of many in his poem.

His *Orlando* is his great work, and on its composition he spent ten years—the noontide of his life. He probably intended to resume the subject in another poem, and he is said actually to have written five books of it; but it is so unequal to the *Orlando* that good critics consider its authorship doubtful. The poet died in the year 1533, aged fifty-nine. He probably exercised as much, if not more, influence upon the refining and perfecting of his native language than any other Italian author, so greatly was the grace and harmony of his style admired, and so eagerly was it imitated.

On taking up the unfinished story of Boiardo, Ariosto commences his poem with a care and minuteness of finish, very unlike the rugged style of his predecessor. The opening lines of the first canto are said to have been written and rewritten many times before they suited the fastidious ear of their author. As they stand at present, they are intended to recall the stately commencement of the *Æneid*:—

‘Ladies and knights, and arms and loves, I sing,
And courtesies, and deeds of daring high.’

Having thus announced the subject of his poem, the author proceeds to take up the situations of the characters from the *Orlando Innamorato*, skilfully weaving the old materials into the new web, joining the broken threads of narrative, and carrying out hints of coming adventure with marvellous facility.

We find ourselves, then, once more listening to the now distant sounds of the retreat and pursuit. Angelica finding her guardian taken prisoner, and herself left unprotected in the deserted tent, hurriedly mounted her palfrey and took refuge in the depths of the tangled wood. Here she encountered Rinaldo in search of his horse, which, contrary to its usual wont, had refused to be caught, when he wished to remount after his unfinished battle with Ruggiero. She hurried on in great disorder at the sight of her now hated lover; next, and almost equally to her horror, she fell in with Ferraù, still engaged, as we left him, fishing with the bough of a tree for his helmet in the river where he had dropped it. Forgetting the ‘canticle’ which Rinaldo had performed upon his back, the Spaniard hastened to commence a new battle with him for the still flying Angelica. They fought until it suddenly struck Rinaldo that whilst they were fighting for the lady she was escaping them both! Ferraù acknowledged that this was a fact; and in all good faith gave Rinaldo a seat behind him. When they had gone a short distance the road branched. Rinaldo,

therefore, took one route and Ferrau the other. The path which the latter had taken soon brought him back to the scene of his luckless fishing; he dismounted and recommenced groping in the bed of the river. But he was suddenly very much terrified at the appearance of the ghost of Argalla, who rose pale and ghastly from the river, with the lost head-piece in his hand, and rated him in good round terms for not having kept his promise to restore it; bidding him, with a sarcasm we should scarcely have expected in a mere ghost, if he required a fine helmet, to win that of Almonte from Orlando, or that of Mambrino from Rinaldo. Ferrau, for once thoroughly ashamed and silenced, for want of other answer, swore, 'by the life of Lanfusa' (his mother), never to wear a helmet till he should have compelled Orlando to give up that of Almonte.

Angelica meanwhile continued her headlong flight till, quite worn out, she stopped to rest in a forest solitude, which is very beautifully described by the poet. Here she was only disturbed by the arrival of that most faithful and uncomplaining of all her lovers, Sacripant, king of Circassia, she having till this moment quite forgotten the fact of her having sent him on a long and dangerous journey on foot, in search of aid during the latter part of the siege of Albracca!

Angelica's character for cool calculating selfishness is here taken up with great fidelity from Boiardo. She considers that Sacripant has never been an importunate lover, although he has unhesitatingly obeyed all her behests. She therefore resolves, as she is cured of her love for Rinaldo, and is sick of all this fighting, to return to her father's kingdom, and to take this least troublesome of her lovers as her protector by the way, giving him such trifling indications of affection as may retain him in her service, without rendering him unpleasantly presumptuous.

Sacripant, ignorant of these calculations, was overjoyed at the sight of his adored mistress, and if he did not altogether fall in with her views, at least appeared to do so, and they commenced their journey at once.

But before long an interruption took place, for they met with Bradamant in search of Ruggiero, from whom she had been separated by the 'traitors of Maganza.' Sacripant, elated by Angelica's favour, and taking Bradamant for a knight, challenged her, and soon measured his length on the ground, whilst his horse was killed by the shock. Much crestfallen, he was obliged to mount Angelica's slighter steed and take her on the crupper; they were both, therefore, much rejoiced to see the noble Boiardo come crashing through the bushes. Rinaldo's steed had been used to be caressed and fed by the hand of Angelica at Albracca, and he now willingly allowed himself to be caught by her. Indeed, this gifted creature had not, we are assured, led his master such a chase from any vice, but, having seen Angelica escape, and having heard his master lament her loss, he wished to lead him upon her track.

Rinaldo, in fact, soon came up, and angrily claimed his steed; Sacripant desired to keep possession, and another fight began, whilst Angelica, doubly horrified at the sight of Rinaldo and the clash of arms, again

escaped. This time she was met by a hermit, whose air of utmost sanctity was, as usual, a cloak for vile passions. We do not meet with Angelica again for a long time, until, having been carried to a desolate island, and cast into a deep sleep by the unholy arts of the hermit, she is seized upon by sea-rovers on the look-out for prey for a certain dreadful Ork which inhabits the sea near the Hebrides.

The story now follows the adventures of Bradamant. She, in prosecuting her search for Ruggiero, fell in with Pinabello, a worthy scion of the house of Maganza. She undertook to deliver his lady from captivity, and went on with him in the direction he pointed out. But on their road they were met by a messenger, who told her that Charlemagne was in great need of the services of all his friends. She debated with herself whether to obey the call or to continue her quest for Ruggiero, but decided for the latter course.

NOTE.—In the last number of “Disobedient Cecil,” by a slip of the pen, corn is said to have blue flowers instead of flax.

HINTS ON READING.

LET us mention to the many who seek for occupation, L. M. M.’s excellent little shilling book entitled *The Year Book of Woman’s Work* (Labour News Publishing Office), which contains a capital epitome of all the employments open to women, and, what is even more valuable, explanations and references to enable them to be applied for.

We would also mention *An Easy Catechism for the Younger Classes* (Parker), which may be very useful to put into the hands of the teachers who are not sufficiently grounded in first truths to teach them clearly to little children.

THE
MONTHLY PACKET
OF
EVENING READINGS
For Members of the English Church.

DECEMBER, 1875.

BETHLEHEM.

‘A little child shall lead them.’

THE music of the Angels’ Hymn
It has not died away,
From many a shrine those strains divine
Are wafted day by day.

Where’er a Christian altar stands,
Our Bethlehem is there ;
And morn by morn the Christ is born,
We find Him everywhere.

How priest-like was the Mother-Maid
When first her Child she kissed ;
How mother-like the priestly hands
That clasp the Eucharist !

Yes ! Bethlehem, ‘the House of Bread,’
This is our Home, and here,
Where shines the Star, the wise men are
And pastoral spirits dear.

Here souls erst dark and desolate,
Abandoned and alone,
Their sorrows past, repose at last.
Beside the manger-throne.

Here hearts grown old regain their youth,
Since Mary’s Babe has smiled ;
And all things sweet together meet
Around the Eternal Child.

His Name is still 'the Prince of Peace,'
 He comes our joy to be ;
 And birthdays bright owe all their light
 To His Nativity.

And souls bereaved, confessing now
 That death has lost its sting,
 He can beguile, His baby-smile
 Transfigures everything.

His Birth it is that conquers death,
 His Life that conquers sin ;
 And oh ! how blest are all who rest
 Those infant-arms within !

They share His triumphs and His joys,
 He makes His goods their own ;
 The world for them is Bethlehem,
 An Altar and a Throne.

His Hands still multiply the loaves,
 Still make the water Wine ;
 Salvation's sacramental wells
 O'erflow with grace divine.

The grace is His, and His the throne
 Established now on earth,
 From under which the waters flow
 Of our baptismal birth.

Out of the mouths of very babes
 Has God ordained strength ;
 And from the Strong all sweetness comes,*
 This Man-child born at length.

After a night of travail sore,
 A weary, weary night,
 His Beauty all-consoling is,
 All-conquering His Might.

He bids us share His throne with Him,
 And wear His diadem ;
 He seeks a cradle in our hearts,
 Ah, this is Bethlehem !

Man's heart has learnt the Angels' mirth,
 His lips their hymn—their creed,
 Since Jesu's birth makes all the earth
 A Bethlehem indeed.

A. G.

BETHLEHEM, *April*, 1875.

* Judges xiv. 14.

ODDS AND ENDS OF WEATHER WISDOM AND FRAGMENTS OF FOLK LORE.

SEPTEMBER.

Come out, 'tis now September,
 The hunter's moon 's begun,
 And through the wheaten stubble
 Is heard the frequent gun.
 The leaves are paling yellow,
 Or kindling into red,
 And the ripe and golden barley
 Is hanging down his head.'

SEPTEMBER is one of the months which has kept its Latin name without any change, and this being the case one would fancy that there could be no difficulty in settling upon its derivation ; and yet enthusiastic philologists have succeeded in getting up a puzzle by endeavouring to prove that it was compounded of the words *septem*, seven, and *imber*, a shower of rain, from the rainy season usually beginning at this season of the year. The first half of this is certainly obvious ; but the suffix *ber*, which belongs alike to the three following months, and which occurs in other Latin words, has nothing to do with the rain, and is most probably only a mere intensitive. It is certainly wonderful that September succeeded in retaining its original name, since more than one Roman Emperor endeavoured to bestow his on the month. Tiberius however declined the honour when it was offered him ; but Domitian attempted to take possession of both September and October, and called the one Germanicus, on account of his having had two triumphs celebrated during this month, and the other Domitianus, after himself ; but this did not last long, as he was shortly after murdered, and the names were erased on every brass and stone on which they had been inscribed ; and according to Macrobius,¹ the caution of succeeding princes prevented them from endeavouring to retain so ominous a name ; but this statement does not seem to have been correct, for it was afterwards called Antoninus, after Antoninus Pius ; Commodus gave it the name Hercules, which he had himself assumed on account of his alleged descent from Jupiter ; and finally, Tacitus wished that it should bear his name ; but as he only reigned six months, this change was not effected.

As to the other names, Verstegan mentions that it was called Gerstmonat, 'for that barley, which that moneth commonly yielded, was anciently called Gerst ; the name of barley being given unto it by reason of the drinke therewith made, called beere ; and from beerelegh it came

* Sed ubi infaustum vocabulum ex omni aere vel saxo placuit eradi menses quoque usurpatione tyrannicæ appellationis exuti sunt. Cautio postea principum cæterorum diri ominis infausta mensibus a Septembri usque ad Decembrem prisca nomina reservavit.—*Macrobii Saturnal.* lib. i. cap. xii.

to, be berlegh; and from berlegh to barley. So in like manner, beere-heyem, to wit, the overdecking or covering of beere, came to be called berhen, and afterwards barme, having since gotten I wot not how many names besides. This excellent and healthsome liquor beere' he adds, antiently also called ael, as of the Danes it still is beere and ale, being in effect all one, was first of the Germans invented and brought into use,' so that he clearly does not agree with the old rhyme given in Fuller's *Worthies*, which says that

‘Hops, reformation, turkeys, carp, and beer,
Came into England all in one year,

nor with the tradition that Bacchus was the inventor of beer, and certainly not with the belief that ‘they who drink beer think beer.’

Another name, ‘Halige monath,’ or ‘Heilige monath’ (holy month) was given to the month ‘for that our forefathers, the while they heathens were, in this month celebrated their devils’ guild.’ The reasoning here does not seem to be very clear, but probably this was only one among the many cases in which the early Christians endeavoured to blot out the remains of former heathen practices by grafting new names and new customs on the old stock; independently of which it does not appear at all certain that the word ‘deofel,’ had anything at all to do with the devil, though our ancestors being deceived by the sound presumably jumped to the conclusion that it could mean no less a personage, whereas in point of fact, the devil, the spirit of evil, had no place at all in the Teutonic mythology. Another solution may be, that as according to Professor Max Müller, the heathen gods were believed by many of the early converts to actually exist as demons, so any worship which was, or had been offered to them, was distinctly devil worship. Any way these deofel guilds were harmless enough, since to them Lappenburg (*Geschichte von England*) says we may trace the origin of the municipal system of the Saxons, for they seem to have combined the double character of a feast and of a court day for settling disputes and trying offences, the priests exercising the criminal jurisdiction. Hence the Christians condemned them under the name of devils’ guilds, and would fain have forbidden the people from feasting in honour of the demons.

With regard to the devil, it is curious that there is a tradition still current in Sussex which particularly connects him with September. In other counties it is held that if you go nutting on Sunday you will see the devil. (In this case, comment is needless, and the moral obvious.) In Sussex it is firmly believed that one particular Sunday in September is the devil’s nutting-day. Nobody knows which Sunday it is, which makes it all the more alarming; and so every Sunday in the month has to be avoided, and careful cottage mothers may be heard cautioning their children against transgressing this rule, and telling them if they do the devil will hold down the branches for them; while ‘As black as

the devil's nut-bag,' is as common a saying, as 'As black as a crow,' is elsewhere. Some years ago I heard of some Sunday-school boys who positively declared that they had seen the devil on one Sunday when they had played truant and gone nutting in the large woods near instead of coming to school. The lady to whom they told this story asked what he was like. 'A little black man with a pack on his back' (probably a pedlar). 'Did he hurt you?' 'No, but he asked if he should help us, and we were all so frightened that we got into the ditch and lay there till he had gone, and then we ran back to the village as fast as we could.' The lady endeavoured to improve the occasion to the best of her ability, by showing how conscience makes cowards of us all. But I believe that her efforts to try and reason the boys out of their belief were quite useless, and that to their dying day they will remain convinced that the devil appeared to them *in propria persona* in the wood. Another form of the belief is that the devil fastens the unlucky nut-gatherer down with the branches, and this actually happened to the boy who was my informant, though no doubt his school-fellows had had a hand in the performance. There is another Sussex superstition also about the blackberries, which is somewhat akin to this last. In the eastern part of the county it is held that the devil 'puts his paw' upon all blackberries after the 1st October; this, perhaps, accounts for their sickly and insipid taste when over-ripe; but in West Sussex, the belief is expanded. There the 11th of October is the particular day, and all children who either gather or eat blackberries on that day 'will fall into great trouble and die before the year is out.' The first time I heard of this curious fancy was when I was told of a farmer's wife living near Arundel, who was making blackberry jam, and not having fruit enough she asked the woman who was helping her to let her children gather some more for her. 'Why, this is the 11th of October,' said the woman in a tone of surprise. 'Well, what of that?' replied her mistress equally astonished. 'Why, I thought every one knew that the devil goes his rounds on the 10th, and spits on the blackberries and if anyone picks them they won't see the year out. No child of mine shall go blackberrying on the 11th.' The same superstition exists in Ireland, where at Michaelmas the devil puts his foot on the blackberries; but a prejudice exists in that country against blackberries at any time, either before or after Michaelmas. Even the children will not touch them; but I do not think they trouble themselves to account for their dislike.

September seems a month to be appreciated, judging from the Italian proverb, 'Would it were ever September;' while a French saying declares that September, *est le mai d'automne*. In Sardinia 'Fools grow fat in September,' because apparently a wise husbandman has so much to do in this month; while at Milan September must be either a very wet or a very dry month, for September either carries away bridges, or else dries up everything high and low. In Portugal they hold the same belief in another form there; September will either dry up the wells, or break

down the bridges—a decided case of too much of a good thing either way. The French and Italians share the saying—

‘Quand le cigale chante en Septembre
N’achète pas de blé pour le revendre.’

But the *cigale’s chant* is generally taken to be a sign of change of weather ; for in England when crickets chirp rain is expected, and so much is this the case, that White, in his *History of Selborne*, calls them the housewife’s barometer. There is another French proverb for this month—

‘Lorsque beaucoup d’étoiles filent en Septembre,
Les tonneaux sont alors trop petits en Novembre.’

But the stars being very brilliant, it is not usually thought a good sign for—

‘Ciel très étoilé
N’est pas de longue durée,’

while the English equivalent is, ‘there is no trusting to a starry sky. Moreover, ‘quand les Etoiles sont plus brillantes que de coutume pluie est probable.’ At Milan, when the stars seem larger and nearer together than usual, a change of weather is expected, and the Maltese say that when the stars twinkle we cry ‘wind.’ So that there seems some wisdom in the Arabic proverb, ‘If the moon be with thee thou needst not care about the stars.’ English children also are told not to point at the stars, for it will bring rain ; but in Germany, where the same rule is also in force, a reason is added, ‘the stars are the angels’ eyes, and to do this will make them weep.’

There is no English saying attached to this month, unless we may reckon Tusser’s—

‘September blow soft
Till the fruit’s in the loft.’

Or the *Book of Knowledge’s* remark that thunder in September ‘signifieth the same year great wind, plenty of corn, and much falling out between man and man.’

The 1st September is naturally more thought of as the beginning of partridge shooting, who by the way has a rhyme of his own—

‘If the woodcock had the partridge’s wing
’T would be the best bird that ever did sing ;
If the partridge had the woodcock’s thigh
’T would be the best bird that ever did fly,’

than as the Festival of S. Giles or Ægidius, the patron saint of Edinburgh, whose hinds still figure as one of the supporters in the coat of arms of that city, and whose name in the feminine form, Egidia, is still used in Scotland ; while, according to *Notes and Queries*, Egidia, Geils, and Giles, were used indifferently in former days for the same person, which must have been almost as confusing as the old ‘Elisabeth, Elspeth, Betty, and Bess,’ of the nursery riddle. But the Scotch had good reason to remember S. Giles, for not only was the whole city of Edinburgh under his special protection, but the principal church

was dedicated to him, and the final point was put to his connection with the place, when William Preston of Gorton, in 1454, succeeded with great trouble (but let us hope not by employing the same method which the 'pious robbers and faithful thieves' of Ely used to obtain possession of the body of S. Withburga), in obtaining an arm-bone of S. Giles, and placed the relic for perpetuity in S. Giles's Church. The municipality in gratitude allowed him to raise an aisle in the church, and granted that he and his successors should have the privilege of carrying the bone in all processions. The relic was extant in 1556, when the dean and chapter expended xiiid. 'in mending and polishing S. Geles arme;' but in 1558 the populace interfered to stop the procession; the image of S. Giles was burnt, and the relic disappeared.

S. Giles's legend is simple enough; he was an Athenian of royal birth, who flourished in the later part of the seventh century. Finding that he was becoming an object of too great veneration in his own country, on account of his having cured a sick man by giving him his cloak, he retired to France, and settled himself in a wilderness near the mouth of the Rhone, where he was fed by a hind, which however at length led to his discovery; for the King of France, having wounded the animal, gave chase, and followed her till he reached the hermitage, where he found the saint with the deer lying beside him.

As the saint would not leave his hermitage, the king built a monastery, on the site of which he made him the Abbot, thus bringing the mountain to Mahomet, instead of Mahomet to the mountain; though another version of the story says that the monastery was not built till after his death, when, according to the Golden Legend, 'many wytnisse that they herde the company of angells beryng the soule of hym unto heven.'

S. Giles was the patron of cripples, apparently by the rule of contrary, since he would not allow himself to be cured of 'an accidental lameness that had seized him, lest he should not otherwise have sufficient means of mortifying himself.' According to the *Clavis Calendaria*, the origin of the old saying, 'as lame as S. Giles's, Cripplegate,' is in allusion to the saint's voluntary lameness . . . and from Cripplegate in London, where even before the Conquest cripples used to assemble to solicit charity, in imitation of the lame man who begged alms of SS. Peter and John at the Gate of the Temple; but whether this be so or not, the churches dedicated to this saint are generally found either in the suburbs or entrances of towns, in order to afford the cripples and beggars (of whom he was also the patron) every facility for paying their devotions to their tutelar saint. There is, or was, another English custom—a relic of happily bygone days, to which S. Giles also lent his name, which was the practice of giving a condemned criminal on his way to Tyburn a flagon of ale to drink outside S. Giles' hospital, which was called S. Giles' bowl; and there is a Yorkshire proverb, 'he will be hanged for leaving his liquor, like the saddler of Bawtry;' while according to Hazlitt, Brand alludes to this custom. There it would appear that the unfor-

fortunate saddler on his way to execution declined the proffered refreshment, and was accordingly hung before the reprieve which had been granted him arrived.

Though S. Giles was a French saint, and enjoyed by far more popularity in Scotland and England than in any of the other countries of Europe, yet there seem only Latin and German sayings connected with him. Of these the first is of the ordinary weatherwise description, but Buckler gives—

Egidi quando lux tua Sancta fuit,
Tum quoque si Phœbus splendet fit copia vini
Et secum autumnus commoda multa trahit.'

The Germans say—

'Wie der Sanct Egidi Tag,
So der ganze Monat mag.'

About Aix la Chapelle, the country people think that cold weather begins on this day, and accordingly they have a proverb, 'Um Sanct Gillis geht Kaiser Karl nach dem Winter quartier, um Christi Himmelfahrt kommt er wieder heraus;' and in Russia also this day is thought to be the carrier away of summer.

The 3rd September belongs to one of the three S. Gregorys, of whom it is said, 'A la Saint Gregoire il faut tailler la vigne pour boire,' for, as another proverb says, 'If you make the vine poor it will make you rich, and this day is marked in some calendars as the festival of rejoicing for the ingathering of the grapes. The 4th is the translation of S. Cuthbert, the patron saint of Durham, who is also commemorated on the 20th March, and no reader of *Marmion* can forget the history of the saint's wanderings after death as told by S. Cuthbert's daughters, the nuns of Lindisfarne, when—

'Closed around the fire
They all in turn essayed to paint
The rival merits of their saint.'

It was really true that—

'How when the rude Danes burnt the pile
The monks fled forth from Holy Isle,
From sea to sea, from shore to shore,
Seven years S. Cuthbert's corpse they bore.

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Till deep in Durham's gothic shade
His relics are in secret laid,
But none may know the place.'

While the legend, in spite of the doubts cast upon it by the nuns, is still believed in Northumberland,

'How on a rock by Lindisfarne
S. Cuthbert sits and toils to frame
The sea-born beads that bear his name.

'Such tales had Whitby's fishers told,
And said they might his shape behold,
And hear his anvil sound,
A deadened clang—a huge dim form,
Seen but and heard when gathering storm
And night were closing round.'

The tradition is that on stormy nights when the wind blows, S. Cuthbert may be heard forging beads for the faithful. He sits in the mist, on a fragment of rock on the shore of Lindisfarne, and hammers with one rock on another which he uses as an anvil, and the shore is always found to be strewn with S. Cuthbert's beads in the morning after a gale. S. Cuthbert also gave his name to the eider ducks, which were called S. Cuthbert's ducks in the *Libellus de S. Cuthberto* of Reginald of Durham, who asserts that the saint made them of use to him and tamed them during his solitary life, and sometimes wrought miracles on their behalf. The robes in which the body of S. Cuthbert was wrapped, and which may, like the stole and maniple, have been the gift of the glorious Athelstane when he visited the shrine in 934, are embroidered with water fowl and porpoises. A Durham bursar's rolls for 1380 mention that 12*d.* was paid to a painter from Newcastle for painting 'one of the birds of S. Cuthbert' for the reredos, while in the feretrar's office were 'pillows of Cuthbert's down.' I have also seen it somewhere suggested that donkeys owe their north country name of 'cuddy' to this saint, and certainly 'Cuddy' is the contraction of Cuthbert, but I have never met with any legend that particularly connected the donkey and the saint. Still whatever *protégés* he may have had, whether biped or quadruped, S. Cuthbert was admirably able to protect them; for, according to the tradition, S. Cuthbert, when the Norman soldiers were advancing towards his holy territory, spread a thick mist so that they were unable to cross the Tees, and when afterwards the Conqueror himself on his return from Scotland visited Durham, he wished to ascertain whether the saint's body really rested there, but while he was in the act of commanding the shrine to be opened he was seized with such a heat and sickness that he rushed from the church, and notwithstanding there was a sumptuous dinner prepared for him he fled without eating a morsel. (which as Sir W. Scott remarks, the historian seems to have thought no small part, both of the miracle and the penance), and mounting his horse never drew bridle until he had passed the bounds of the bishopric. After this, says Higge in his curious legend, the king had a reverend opinion of S. Cuthbert.* S. Cuthbert's banner is also worth mentioning 'for it was one of the most famous of the holy standards.' At the battle of Neville's Cross, the Prior of Durham was warned in a vision to fasten to the point of a spear 'the holy corporex cloth wherewith S. Cuthbert covered the chalice when he used to say mass; and to display it on the Red Hills close outside the city and within sight of the battle-field.' The victory was attributed to this relic, and it was afterwards fastened into the centre of a banner

* *The Great Shrines of England.*

covered with white velvet on which was laid a cross of red. This was the banner of S. Cuthbert which was carried against Scotland by Richard II. and Henry IV., and which after the dissolution was 'despitefully burned in her fire by the wife of Dean Whittingham, to the open contempt and disgrace of all ancient reliques.'

The 7th September is the next day which has a proverb attached to it.

'Au septième Septembre sème ton blé,
Car ce jour vaut du fumier.
Sème tes blés à la S. Maurice (Sept. 22),
Tu en auras à ton caprice
Sème à la S. Denis (Oct. 9),
Tu contempleras tes semis.'

The 8th September is the day which is kept in Roman Catholic countries as the nativity of the blessed Virgin. According to *Notes and Queries*, in some parts of England this day is still called Lady-day in harvest, while in Switzerland it is called 'Our Lady in September.' The festival was first appointed to be kept by Pope Servius 695, and according to the legend as related by Baptista Mantuani (*Fastorum*) this day was chosen because a certain Carmelite hermit one night was greatly surprised to hear the sound of singing in the air above him. The next year he heard the same thing on the same day and a third year also. He was much perplexed to know the meaning of what he heard, but at length a voice told him that the angels were keeping holiday on account of its being the nativity of the blessed Virgin.

This festival was some time without an octave, and the reason for which one was added is curious, and gives us a quaint glimpse of the manners and modes of thought of bygone days. The cardinals had met to elect a new pope after the death of Gregory IX., but they were unable to come to an agreement, and the people of Rome waxing impatient they vowed 'to add an octave to the Nativity of the Virgin' if they could only arrive at a decision. Pope Celestine was chosen, but as he only lived eighteen days after his election it was left to his successor Innocent IV. to make the addition, which was done accordingly in 1244.

There are two German proverbs belonging to this day—

'Wie das Wetter an Maria geburt, so soll es vier Wochen bleiben.'

'An Maria geburt
Fliegen die Schwalben furt.'

While an accusation was formerly brought 'against good Queen Bess' that she suffered the nativity of the Virgin Mary in September to be turned to the celebration of her own birthday which happened the day before.

The 9th belongs to S. Gorgonius, a rather obscure saint, who seems none the less to be a favourite in the north of Italy, for there are several sayings attached to him, of which the one current in Tuscany 'if it rains on S. Gorgonio's day, October will be a perfect demon' is the only one worth recording.

Holy Rood day is the 14th September, a day which owes the place it

still retains in the Anglican calendar to the fact that it is a guide to the autumn ember days, which always take place on the following Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. The festival was in commemoration of the cross which appeared to Constantine in the sky, but it was originally instituted in remembrance of the Emperor Heraclius having recovered the wood of the true cross, which had been taken by Chosroes, king of Persia, when he plundered Jerusalem, and there is a pretty legend which tells how, when the Emperor was going to replace the cross in its former position, he could not move it when he was dressed in his royal robes but directly he took them off he could lift it with ease. There was a curious superstition connected with this event, which is related by Regordius, an historian of the 13th century, that the mouths of Christians used to be supplied with 30, or in some instances 32 teeth, but that after the cross had been stolen by infidels no one has ever been possessed of more than 22. While Herrick in the *Hesperides* gives a curious 'old wife's prayer' to the Holy Rood—

' Holy Rood, come forth and shield
Us i'the city and the field,
Safely guard us now and aye
From the blast that burns by day,
And those sounds that us affright
In the dead of dampish night.
Drive all hurtful fiends us fro
By the time of the cock's first crow.'

The rood itself, which might have been seen in almost every, if not every, church in England before the Reformation, differed from the simple crucifix, inasmuch as it had not only the image of our Lord extended upon it, but the figures of S. John and the blessed Virgin, one on each side, in allusion to S. John xix. 26. This representation was usually placed over the screen, which divided the nave from the chancel in our churches. To our ancestors we are told that it conveyed a full type of the Christian Church, the nave representing the Church militant, and the chancel the Church triumphant, showing that all who would go from one to the other must pass under the rood and suffer affliction.

There is a Russian proverb for S. Niceta's day, the fifteenth; 'then the wild geese fly away,'—a sure sign of approaching winter—while curiously enough the same day is fixed upon in the Roman Calendar as the one on which the swallows migrate; but geese, either wild or tame, have always been famed for their weatherwise prognostics. The author of the strange *Metamorphosis of Man, Transformed into a Wildernesse, deciphred in characters*, 1630, speaking of the goose, says, 'She is no witch or astrologer to divine by the starres, but yet hath a shrewd guesse of raine weather,' being as good as an almanac to some that believe in her; while in Scotland they say—

' Wild geese, wild geese, ganging to the sea
Good weather it will be;
Wild geese, wild geese, ganging to this hill
The weather it will spill.'

There is only a French saying for S. Lambert's day, the seventeenth—

'S. Lambert pluvieux
Neuf jours dangereux.'

But S. Matthew, which is the next important day, is, like all the apostles, well provided. The English proverbs, 'S. Matthew brings cold, rain, and dew—

'At S. Matthew
Get candlesticks now,'

and—

At S. Matthee
Shut up the bee.'

all point to the fact that—

'The frowning skies begin to change their hue,
And time turns up the wrong side of the year,
And shedding trees begin the ground to strew
With yellow leaves, and bitter blasts to blow
Sad auguries of winter.'

In Italy, too, they think that the fine sunny weather is now at an end ; so at Milan they say you will not see many fine days after S. Matthew ; and at Rome, S. Matthew bids good-bye to summer, and S. Maurice shuts the door after him ; while in Germany—

'Tritt Mattheus stürmisch ein
Wirds bin Ostern Winter kein.'

Moreover, the spider's web that we call gossamer is in Germany connected with this saint, and called 'Matthew sommer,' on account of its appearance at this time. Another name by which it is also known is 'Marien Faden,' or 'unsere lieben Frauen faden,' our dear Lady's thread, from the legend that the gossamer is the remains of the blessed Virgin's shroud, which fell away in fragments as she was carried up to heaven ; though another and still more fanciful tradition makes it the thread or cotton which she used when working ; and adds that if anyone could make it serve the same purpose, the work that was so done would last for ever. The English saying—

'When you see the gossamer flying
Be sure the air's a drying,'

deserves to be recorded, since it has the merit of being true, which is not always the case with these weatherwise predictions, for the web will not float in damp weather.

The 22nd, S. Maurice's day, has only one saying besides the one connected with S. Matthew, which I have already mentioned, which is current in Suabia, 'Wenn es an Mauritius klares Wetter ist, so sollen im nächsten Winter viele Winde lossen.'

September has many well-known saints, for the 27th is dedicated to SS. Cosmos and Damian, the patrons of doctors, of whom it is said in Bohemia, when any one is at the point of death, and 'physicians are in vain,' that there is nothing left but to send for the two. The 28th belongs to that 'good king Wenceslaus, who was Duke of Bohemia, 938,

one of whose many good deeds is commemorated in the carol which tells how—

‘ Good King Wenceslaus looked forth
On the feast of Stephen,
When the snow lay on the ground
Dark and crisp and even.

‘ Brightly shone the moon that night,
Though the frost was cruel,
When a poor man came in sight
Gathering winter fuel.’

And how the king and his page set off to carry him ‘flesh and wine,’ till the page complained that the night was so dark, and the wind so cold, that he could go no longer, upon which S. Wenceslaus bade him—

‘ Mark my footsteps, good my page,
Tread thou in them boldly,
Thou shalt find the winter stage
Freeze thy blood less coldly.

‘ In his master’s steps he trod
Where the snow lay dinted,
Heat was in the very sod
Which the saint had printed.

The 29th is Michaelmas Day, the festival of S. Michael and All Angels ; and, according to Mrs. Jameson, ‘the worship paid to S. Michael originated in the far east, and is supposed to have been adopted by the Oriental Christians in consequence of a famous apparition of the Archangel at Colossæ in Phrygia, which caused him to be held in especial honour by the people of that city, and perhaps occasioned the particular warning of S. Paul addressed to the Colossians.’ Another legend told of his descent upon Mount Galgano in Apulia, somewhere about the close of the fifth century, in order to point out the site of the church, which was to be built and dedicated to him. A third time the Archangel appeared to Gregory the Great, who beheld him (at a time when the pestilence was raging at Rome, and S. Gregory was leading a procession of intercession) alight on the Mole of Adrian, and sheath his blood-stained sword, so that the saint knew the plague was stayed. The tomb of Adrian has ever since been called the Castle of San Angelo, while a church was also built there and dedicated to S. Angelo. In 708 the angel again appeared to Aubert, Bishop of Avranches, and directed him to erect a church in his honour on Mount S. Michael in Normandy. This church became a very popular place for pilgrimages, and in consequence S. Michael was chosen as one of the patron saints of France, and a military order was instituted in his honour by Louis XI. in 1469. Selden says that this order was made upon the occasion of a vision (as their historians relate) of the Archangel’s appearance upon Orleans bridge as their ‘Tutelar’ against the English, but whether this were so or no, the English lay claim to a vision of the angel standing on S. Michael’s Mount in Cornwall of their own. S. Michael is said to have been seen both in 495, and again in 710, but I am afraid that this tradition is not well

supported, especially as the last date looks suspicious, much as if the inhabitants of Cornwall did not wish to be outdone by their Norman neighbours; but any way, the Cornish Mount S. Michael became the seat of a body of monks, who received a charter from Edward the Confessor, 1044, and many privileges from Pope Gregory VII., 1079. The English and French visions of S. Michael have had a great influence over the dedications of churches along the southern and northern coasts, particularly on such as happen to be built on high ground. It has been said that the reason for this latter fact is that it is in allusion to S. Michael's having been the highest of the heavenly host, but I should think that the traditionary descents which I have just mentioned (which were always on mountains or some considerable eminence) had most likely a good deal to do in influencing the choice in hopes perhaps that they might be similarly favoured.

S. Michael is represented in the *Clog Almanac* by a pair of scales, which are emblematic of his being the 'Lord of souls and conductor and guardian of the spirits of the dead,' and as such he is often represented as engaged in weighing souls, as represented by little naked human figures in a balance, and I remember hearing a quaint story which told how S. Michael and the devil were weighing a female soul in the balance, which seemed to be even, when the devil exclaimed 'Saint Michel, this woman had tenne diurse gownes and as meni cotes, etc.,' and he heaped these into the balance with her evil deeds, and weighed it down on that side. Afterwards he dipped these garments into the fire of hell, and dressed the unhappy owner therein before he cast her into the pit. Another legend of the same kind told of the contention between the devil and the angel for the soul of the Emperor Henry II., in which both S. Michael and S. Laurence play their part. One night a certain hermit was alone in his cell, when he heard sounds as of a host of wild men rushing and trampling by. He called to them, and asked them what was the reason for their unseemly mirth, and why they disturbed his peaceful solitude in this manner; and they answered 'We are demons, and Henry the Emperor is dying, and we are going to seize his soul.' To which the hermit replied, 'I conjure thee on thy return to come to me, and tell me how thou hast sped.' The demons readily agreed, and went on their way; but the same night the same sounds were heard, and the hermit again looking out, saw that the demons had come according to their promise to tell him what had happened; but they had not fared so well as they expected; for though they said, 'We came at the right moment when the Emperor had just expired, and hastened to claim his soul, his good angel was also there to prevent us. We disputed long, and at last the angel of judgment, S. Michael, laid his good and evil deeds in the scales, and behold! our scale descended and touched the ground, when all at once yonder roasted fellow (for so they blasphemously styled the blessed S. Laurence), appeared on his side, and flung a great golden pot (for so the reprobate styled the holy cup), into

the other scale, and ours flew up, and we were forced to depart; but at least we were avenged on the golden pot, for we broke off the handle, and here it is,' and with this the whole company of demons vanished. The hermit rose up in the morning, and went to the city, where he found that it was quite true that the Emperor was dead, and the golden cup, which he had piously presented to the Church of S. Laurence, was found with only one handle, the other having mysteriously disappeared that same night.

To come to the more modern customs connected with Michaelmas rather than with S. Michael. A curious practice is mentioned in Britton and Brayley's *History of Surrey*, vol. iii. p. 41, as belonging to the Sunday before Michaelmas-eve, which was called *crack nut* Sunday, at Kingston, from a custom which was carried on even in the church itself, until a time far within the memory of many aged parishioners, namely that of the congregation cracking nuts during the performance of divine service on this Sunday, but the practice (most happily) has fallen into disuse, an effectual stand having been made against the practice by the church officers about fifty years ago. The custom was not confined to the younger members of the congregation, but was practised by old and young alike, and the cracking noise was often so powerful that the minister was obliged to suspend his reading or discourse until greater quietness was obtained. It has been suggested that this custom must have had some original connection with the choosing bailiffs on Michaelmas-day, and of the usual civic feast attending that proceeding. It would seem, however, from the following passage in the *Vicar of Wakefield* (Chapter IV.), that the custom was not confined to Kingston, for the good vicar, speaking of his parishioners says:—'They kept up the Christmas-carol, sent true lovers' knots on Valentine's-morning, eat pancakes at Shrove-tide, showed their wit on the first of April, and religiously cracked nuts on Michaelmas-eve.' But the discordant ceremony of cracking nuts in the church during divine service has a parallel even in the present day in the custom of waving a gad whip over the clergyman's head on every Palm Sunday in Caistor church, in Lincolnshire, after cracking it three times in the church porch at the commencement of the reading of the first and second lesson. The right of holding certain property in Caistor parish is preserved by this singular practice, and many other customary tenures are yet retained by customs analogous to those of Kingston and Caistor, and similar practices are observed elsewhere. For instance, the little Jewish children are accustomed to carry small wooden hammers, made for the purpose, into the Synagogue at the feast of Purim (February 14th and 15th), and hiss and knock the benches loudly and violently whenever the name of Haman is mentioned during the reading of the Megillah; while akin to this is a practice at Kidderminster, which brings us back to Michaelmas again, that on the election of a bailiff at that place, which always takes place on the 29th September, the inhabitants assemble in the principal streets to throw cabbage-stalks at each other.

The town-house bell gives the signal for the affray ; this is called 'the lawless hour.' This done, for it lasts an hour, the bailiff elect, and corporation in their robes, preceded by the band, visit the old bailiff, constables, etc., attended by the mob. In the meantime the most respectable families and people in the neighbourhood meet, and fling apples at them as they pass. The small boys at Kidderminster must have every reason to wish that this custom should be preserved, for though it does not sound like a very dignified proceeding, yet it is an ill wind that blows no one any good.

The origin of the Michaelmas goose, albeit we all know that it is—

'September when by custom (right divine)
Geese are ordained to bleed at Michael's shrine,'

is one of the minor puzzles to all those people who are not content to rest satisfied with the story that Queen Elizabeth was eating a goose at Sir Nevile Umfraville's, on the 29th September, 1588, when news was brought her of the defeat of the Spanish Armada, and that she, as the readiest way of expressing her delight, commanded that the same dish might be always provided for her on every 29th September, in order that the glorious event might be duly commemorated ; though the historian does not add whether her gracious majesty limited herself to this day, or ever ate goose at any other time.

'Oh, Nature, to old England still
Continue these mistakes ;
Oh give us for our kings such queens,
And for our ducks such Drakes.'

But Brand, by reference to Blount's *Jocular Tenures*, has shown that the custom existed as early as the 10th year of Edward IV., when bringing a goose fit for the lord's dinner appears to have been usual, while Gascoyne in his *Flowers*, 1575, says :—

'And when the tenauntes come to paie their quarter's rent,
They bringe some fowles at Midsummer, a dish of fish in Lent,
At Christmasse a capon, at Michaelmas a goose,
And somewhat else at New Yeares tide, for fear the lease flees loose.'

—which quite puts an end to the Armada theory, since independently of the date at which the poem was written, the poet himself actually died eleven years before good Queen Bess's celebrated dinner. But probably, as Beckwith suggests, no other reason can be given for the custom but that Michaelmas-day was a great festival, and geese at that time most plentiful, though a writer in *Notes and Queries*, vol. iv. p. 230, says that a learned German work (*Fest-kalenders*), sees in our Michaelmas goose the last traces of the goose offered of old to Proserpine, the infernal goddess of death, and also of the offerings (among which the goose also figured), formerly made to Odin, as a pagan festival in his honour existed at this time of the year, which, at the introduction of Christianity was not abolished but transferred to S. Michael. But still this argument seems hardly sound, since the English are the only nation who eat goose on

Michaelmas-day, having apparently transferred to this day a practice that is observed abroad on that of S. Martin, the 11th November. Indeed, S. Martin's bird is the name by which the goose is always known among many of the continental nations, and was it not that Christian who was King of Denmark in 1455, or thereabouts, who said that he hoped to live to see the time when not only nobles, but every burgher throughout his dominions should be able to feed on a fat goose on S. Martin's-day? which reminds one of Henri IV's wish for his countrymen.

There is a popular saying that if you eat goose on Michaelmas-day you will never want money all the year round, which the British Apollo undertakes to explain after this fashion :—

The custom framed in days of yore
Is grounded on a prudent score,
For doubtless 'twas at first designed
To make the people seasons mind,
That so they might apply their care
To all those things which needful are,
And by a good industrious hand
Know when and how t'improve their land.'

While speaking of S. Michael, we must not forget his special flower, the Michaelmas daisy, for, according to the Catholic florist—

'The Michaelmas daisy among dead weeds
Blooms for S. Michael's valorous deeds,
And seems the last of flowers that stood
Till the feast of S. Simon and S. Jude.'

And as to the Michaelmas proverbs they are endless. The *Shepherd's Kalendar* says :—'If Michaelmas-day be fine, the sun will shine much in the winter, though the wind at north-east will frequently reign long, and be sharp and nipping;' while 'Quand le vent est au nord le jour de la Saint Michel le mois d'Octobre est sec,' so that the wild north-easter is not altogether unwelcome, even though according to the Walloon saying, 'A south wind that freezes, a north-east wind that thaws, and a woman who says little are three things not often met with.' At Milan they hold that on Michaelmas-day the heat leaves us, while if the Archangel wet his wings it rains up till Christmas. The French, too, say that :—

'Pluie de Saint Michel
Soit devant ou derrière elle ne demeure au ciel ;'

—while in Germany 'Regen am Sanct Michaelstag lässt ohne Gewitter einen milden Winter, mit Gewitter viel Wind erwarten,' and the Russian speech that on S. Cyriac's-day, September 29th, the cold begins; and on S. Mary's-day, in the winter, November 9th, it has set in.

With regard to the fruit, the French give sound advice, 'a la Saint Michel cueille chaque fruit,' and the English rhyme runs :—

'At Michaelmas time, or a little before,
Half an apple goes to the core.
At Christmas time, or a little after,
A crab in the hedge and thanks to the grafter.'

And another English saying is :—

‘ A Michaelmas rot
Comes ne’er in the pot.’

The Germans have a long prognostication beginning—

‘ Willst du sehen wie das Jahr gerathen soll,
So merke folgende Lehre gar wohl,’

—which is so exactly like the rules laid down in the *Husbandman’s Practice*, that it would be a work of supererogation to give them both, and would almost incline one to believe that one or other must be a reproduction. ‘ If thou wilt see and know how it will go that year, then take heed of the oakapples about S. Michael’s-day, for by them you shall know how that year shall be. If the apples of the oak-trees when they be cut within be full of spiders, then followeth a naughty year; if the apples have within them flies, that betokens a meetly good year; if they have maggots within them, then followeth a good year; if there be nothing in them, then followeth a great dearth; if the apples be many and early ripe, so shall it be an early winter, and very much snow shall afore Christmas, and after that it shall be cold; if the inner part or kernel be fair and clear, then shall the summer be fair and corn good also; but if they be very moist, then shall the summer also be moist, but if they be lean, there shall be a hot and dry summer. ‘ Sind sie mager so wird der sommer heiss.’

The Michaelmas moon is also an object of interest, for so many days old the moon is on Michaelmas-day, so many floods will there be after, while—

‘ The Michaelmas moon
Rises nine nights alike soon.’

According to Mr. Swainson, the nearest moon to the autumnal equinox is called the harvest moon (and the one immediately preceding it the hunter’s moon), because the former rises nearer to the same time each succeeding night, at this time of the year, than it does at any other. It has received this name in autumn on account probably of its use to the farmers when pressed for time for the ingathering of the harvest.

B. C. C.

THE THREE BRIDES.

BY CHARLOTTE M. YONGE.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE LADY GREEN MANTLE.

The night, just like the night before,
In terrors passed away,
Nor did the demons vanish thence
Before the dawn of day.

Moore.

THE turmoil was over, the gains had been emptied into bags to be counted at leisure, the relics of the sale left to be disposed of through

the *Exchange and Mart*. Terry, looking tired to death, descended from his post as assistant showman ; and, with some gentlemen who were to dine at Compton Poyntsett, Cecil drove home to dress in haste, and act hostess to a large dinner party. All the time she felt giddy at the words she had heard—'Mr. Poyntsett's old flame.' It was constantly ringing in her ears, and one conviction was before her mind. Her cheeks burnt like fire, and when she reached her own room at night, and leant from the window to cool them, they only burnt the more.

Had she been wilfully deceived ? Had she been taking the counsel of a jealous woman about her husband ? Had not Camilla assured her that the object of his first love was not in the country ? Ay ; but when that was spoken Camilla herself was in London, and Cecil knew enough of her friend to be aware that she viewed such a subterfuge as ingenious. Even then she had perceived that the person alluded to could only have been a Vivian, and the exclamation of careless spite carried assurance to her that she had been tricked into confidence, and acceptance of the advice of a rival. She had a feverish longing to know more, and obtain explanation and external certainty. But how ?

Raymond was one of the very tired that night. He fell asleep the instant his head touched the pillow ; but it was that sobbing, sighing sleep which had before almost swept away, from very ruth, her resolution ; and on this night there were faltering words, strangely though unconsciously replying to her thoughts. 'Camilla, a cruel revenge !' 'Poor child ! but for you she might have learnt.' 'My mother !' 'Why, why this persistent hatred ?' 'Cannot you let us alone ?' 'Must you destroy our home ?'

These were the mutterings at intervals. She listened, and in the darkness her impulse was to throw herself on her husband, tell him all, show him how she had been misled, and promise to give up all to which that true Vivienne had prompted her. She did even try to wake him, but the attempt caused only a more distinct expostulation of 'Cannot you let her alone ?' 'Cannot you let us learn to love one another ?' 'It may be revenge on me or my mother ; but what has she done ?' 'Don't ! —oh, don't !'

The distress she caused forced her to desist, and she remembered how Raymond had always warned her. The intimacy with Lady Tyrrell had been in the teeth of his remonstrances. He had said everything to prevent it short of confessing his former attachment, and though resentful that the warning had been denied her, she felt it had been well that she had been prevented from putting the question on her first impulse. Many ways of ascertaining the fact were revolved by her as with an aching head she lay hopelessly awake till morning, when she fell into a doze which lasted until she found that Raymond had risen, and that she must dress in haste, unless she meant to lose her character for punctuality. Her head still ached, and she felt thoroughly tired ; but when Raymond advised her to stay at home, and recruit herself for the

ball, she said the air of the downs would refresh her. Indeed, she felt as if quiet and loneliness would be intolerable until she could understand herself and what she had heard.

Raymond took the reins of the barouche, and a gentleman who had slept at the hall went on the box beside him, leaving room for Rosamond and her brother, who were to be picked up at the rectory; but when they drew up there, only Rosamond came out in the wonderful bonnet, just large enough to contain one big water-lily, which suited well with the sleepy grace of her movements, and the glossy sheen of her mauve silk.

'Terry is not coming. He has a headache, poor boy,' she said, as Julius shut her into the barouche. 'Take care of him and baby.'

'Take care of yourself, Madam Madcap,' said Julius with a smile, as she bent down to give him a parting kiss, with perhaps a little pleading for forgiveness in it. But instead of, as last year, shuddering, either at its folly or publicity, Cecil felt a keen pang of desire for such a look as half rebuked, while it took a loving farewell of Rosamond. Was Camilla like that statue which the husband inadvertently espoused with a ring, and which interposed between him and his wife for ever?

Rosamond talked. She always had a certain embarrassment in *tête-à-têtes* with Cecil, and it took form in a flow of words. 'Poor Terry! he turned faint and giddy at breakfast. I thought he had been indulging at the refreshment-stall, but he says he was saving for a fine copy of the *Faerie Queen* that Friskyball told him of at a book-stall at Backsworth, and existed all day on draughts of water when his throat grew dry as showman; so I suppose it is only inanition, coupled with excitement and stuffiness, and that quiet will repair him. He would not hear of my staying with him.'

'I suppose you do not wish to be late?'

'Certainly not,' said Rosamond, who, indeed, would have given up before, save for her bonnet and her principle; and whatever she said of Lady Rathforlane's easy management of her nurslings, did not desire to be too many hours absent from her Julia.

"I only want to stay till the Three-year-old Cup has been run for," said Cecil. 'Mrs. Duncombe would feel it unkind if we did not.'

'You look tired,' said Rosamond, kindly; 'put your feet upon the front seat—nobody will look. Do you know how much you cleared?'

'Not yet,' said Cecil. 'I do not know what was made by the raffles. How I do hate them. Fancy that lovely opal Venetian vase going to that big bony Scotswoman, Mr. M'Vie's mother.'

'Indeed! That is a pity. If I had known it would be raffled for, I would have sent a private commission, though I don't know if Julius would have let me. He says it is gambling. What became of the Spa workbox, with the passion-flower wreath?'

'I don't know. I was so disgusted, that I would not look any more. I never saw such an obnoxious girl as that Miss Moy.'

'That she is,' said Rosamond. 'I should think she was acting the fast girl as found in sensation novels.'

'Exactly,' said Cecil, proceeding to narrate the proposed election; and in her need of sympathy she even told its sequel, adding, 'Rosamond, do you know what she meant?'

'Is it fair to tell you?' said Rosamond, asking a question she knew to be vain.

'I must know whether I have been deceived.'

'Never by Raymond?' cried Rosamond.

'Never, never, never!' cried Cecil, with most unusual excitement. 'He told me all that concerned himself at the very first. I wish he had told me who it was. How much it would have saved! Rosamond, you know, I am sure.'

'Yes, I made Julius tell me; but indeed, Cecil, you need not mind. Never has a feeling more entirely died out.'

'Do you think I do not know that?' said Cecil. 'Do you think my husband could have been my husband if he had not felt *that*?'

'Dear Cecil, I am so glad,' cried impulsive Rosamond; her gladness, in truth, chiefly excited by the anger that looked like love for Raymond. 'I mean, I am glad you see it so, and don't doubt him.'

'I hope we are both above that,' said Cecil. 'No, it is Camilla that I want to know about. I *must* know whether she told me truth.'

'She told! What did she tell you?'

'That *he*—Raymond—had loved some one,' said Cecil in a stifled voice; 'that I little knew what his love could be. I thought it had been for her sister in India. She told me that it was nobody in the country. But then we were in town.'

'Just like her!' cried Rosamond, and wondered not to be contradicted.

'Tell me how it really was?' only asked Cecil.

'As far as I know, the attachment grew up with Raymond, but it was when the brother was alive, and Sir Harry at his worst; and Mrs. Poynsett did not like it, though she gave in at last, and tried to make the best of it; but then she—Camilla as you call her—met the old monster, Lord Tyrrell, made up a quarrel, because Mrs. Poynsett would not abdicate, and broke it off.'

'She said Mrs. Poynsett only half consented, and that the family grew weary of her persistent opposition.'

'And she made you think it Mrs. Poynsett's doing, and that she is not possible to live with! O Cecil, you will not think that any longer. Don't you see that it is breaking Raymond's heart?'

Cecil's tears were starting, and she was very near sobbing as she said, 'I thought perhaps if we were away by ourselves he might get to care for me. *She* said he never would while his mother was by—that she would not let him.'

'That's not a bit true!' said Rosamond, indignantly. 'Is it not what she has most at heart, to see her sons happy, when she has even tried to

interfere between Julius and me? Not that she could,' added Rosamond to herself in a happy little whisper, not meant to be heard, but it was ; and with actual, though suppressed sobs, Cecil exclaimed—

'O Rose, Rose! what do you do to make your husband love you?'

'Do? Be very naughty!' said Rosamond, forced to think of the exigencies of the moment, and adding lightly, 'There! it won't do to cry. Here are the gentlemen looking round to see what is the matter.'

Ardently did she wish to have been able to put Cecil into Raymond's arms, and run out of sight, but with two men-servants with crossed arms behind, a strange gentleman in front, the street of Wilsbro' at hand, and the race ground impending, sentiment was impossible, and she could only make herself a tonic, and declare nothing to be the matter; while Cecil, horrified at attracting notice, righted herself and made protest of her perfect health and comfort. When Raymond, always careful of her, stopped the carriage and descended from his perch to certify himself whether she was equal to going on, his solicitude went to her heart, and she gave his hand, as it lay on the door, an affectionate thankful pressure, which so amazed him that he raised his eyes to her face with a softness in them that made them for a moment resemble Frank's.

That was all, emotion must be kept at bay, and as vehicles thickened round them as they passed through Wilsbro' the two ladies betook themselves to casual remarks upon them. Overtaking the Sirenwood carriage just at the turn upon the down, Raymond had no choice but to take up his station with that on one side, and on the other Captain Duncombe's drag, where, fluttering with Dark Hag's colours, were perched Mrs. Duncombe and Miss Moy, just in the rear of the like conveyance from the barracks.

Greetings, and invitations to both elevations were plentiful, and Rosamond would have felt in her element on the military one. She was rapidly calculating, with her good natured eye, whether the choice her rank gave her would exclude some eager girl, when Cecil whispered, 'Stay with me, pray,' with an irresistibly beseeching tone. So the Strangeways sisters climbed up, nothing loath; Lady Tyrrell sat with her father, the centre of a throng of gentlemen, who welcomed her to the ground where she used to be a reigning belle; and the Colonel's wife, Mrs. Ross, came to sit with Lady Rosamond. The whole was perfect enjoyment to this last. She felt it a delightful taste of her merry old Bohemian days to sit in the clear September sunshine, exhilarated by the brilliancy and life around, laughing with her own little court of officers, exclaiming at every droll episode, holding her breath with the thrill of universal expectation and excitement, in the wonderful hush of the multitude as the thud of the hoofs and rush in the wind was heard coming nearer, straining her eyes as the glossy creatures and their gay riders flashed past, and setting her whole heart for the moment on the one she was told to care for.

Raymond, seeing his ladies well provided for, gave up his reins to the

coachman, and started in quest of a friend from the other side of the county. About an hour later, when luncheon was in full progress, and Rosamond was, by Cecil's languor, driven into doing the honours, with her most sunshiny drollery and mirth, Raymond's hand was on the carriage door, and he asked in haste, 'Can you spare me a glass of champagne? Have you a scent bottle?'

'An accident?'

'Yes, no, not exactly. She has been knocked down and trampled on.'

'Who? Let me come! Can't I help? Could Rosamond?'

'No, no. It is a poor woman, brutally treated. No, I say, I'll manage. It is a dreadful scene, don't.'

But there was something in his tone which impelled Rosamond to open the carriage door and spring out.

'Rose, I say it is no place for a lady. I can't answer for it to Julius.'

'I'll do that. Take me.'

There was no withstanding her, and, after all, Raymond's tone betrayed that he was thankful for her help, and knew that there was no danger for her.

He had not many yards to lead her. The regions of thoughtless gaiety were scarcely separated from the regions of undisguised evil, and Raymond, on his way back from his friend, had fallen on a horrible row, in which a toy-selling woman had been set upon, thrown down and trodden on, and then dragged out by the police, bleeding and senseless. When he brought Rosamond to the spot, she was lying propped against a bundle, moaning a little, and guarded by a young policeman, who looked perplexed and only equal to keeping back the crowd, who otherwise, with better or worse purposes, would have rushed back in the few minutes during which Mr. Poyntsett had been absent.

They fell back, staring and uttering expressions of rough wonder at the advance of the lady in her glistening silk, but as she knelt down by the poor creature, held her on her arm, bathed her face with scent on her own handkerchief, and held to her lips the champagne that Raymond poured out, there was a kind of hoarse cheer.

'I think her arm is put out,' said Rosamond; 'she ought to go to the Infirmary.'

'Send for a cab,' said Raymond to the policeman; but at that moment the girl opened her eyes, started at the sight of him, and tried to hide her face with her hand.

'It is poor Fanny Reynolds,' said he in a low voice to Rosamond, while the policeman was gruffly telling the woman she was better, and ought to get up and not trouble the lady; but Rosamond waved off his too decided assistance, saying:

'I know who she is; she comes from my husband's parish; and I will take her home. You would like to go home, would you not, poor Fanny?'

The woman shuddered, but clung to her; and in a minute or two an unwilling fly had been pressed into the service, and the girl lifted into it by Raymond and the policeman.

'You are really going with her!' said the former. 'You will judge whether to take her home; but she ought to go to the Infirmary first.'

'Tell Cecil I am sorry to desert her,' said Rosamond, as he wrung her hand, then paid the driver and gave him directions, the policeman going with them to clear the way through the throng to the border of the down.

The choice of the cabman had not been happy. He tried to go towards Backsworth, and when bidden to go to Wilsbro', growled out an imprecation, and dashed off at a pace that was evident agony to the poor patient; but when Rosamond stretched out at the window to remonstrate, she was answered with rude abuse that he could not be hindered all day by whims. She perceived that he was so much in liquor that their connection had better be as brief as possible; and the name on the door showed that he came from beyond the circle of influence of the name of Charnock Poyntsett. She longed to assume the reins, if not to lay the whip about his ears; but all she could do was to try to lessen the force of the jolts by holding up the girl, as the horse was savagely beaten, and the carriage so swayed from side to side that she began to think it would be well if there were not three cases for the infirmary instead of one. To talk to the girl or learn her wishes was not possible, among the moans and cries caused by the motion; and it was no small relief to be safely at the Infirmary door, though there was no release till after a fierce altercation with the driver, who first denied and then laughed to scorn the ample fare he had received, so that had any policeman been at hand, the porter and house-surgeon would have given him in charge, but they could only take his number and let him drive off in a fury.

Poor Fanny was carried away fainting to the accident ward, and Rosamond found it would be so long before she would be visible again, that it would be wiser to go home and send in her relations, but there was not a fly or cab left in Wilsbro', and there was nothing for it but to walk.

She found herself a good deal shaken, and walked fast because thus her limbs did not tremble so much, while the glaring September afternoon made her miss the parasol she had left in the carriage, and find little comfort in the shadeless erection on her head. It was much further than she had walked for a long time past, and she had begun to think she had parted with a good deal of her strength before the Compton woods grew more defined, or the church tower came any nearer.

Though the lane to the Reynolds' colony was not full in her way, she was glad to sit down in the shade to speak to old Betty, who did not comport herself according to either extreme common to parents in literature.

'So Fanny, she be in the 'firmery, be her? I'm sure as 'twas very good

of the young Squire and you, my lady ; and I'm sorry her's a bin and give you so much trouble.'

Everybody was harvesting but the old woman, who had the inevitable bad leg. All men and beasts were either in the fields or at the races, and Rosamond, uncertain whether her patient were not in a dying state, rejoiced in her recent acquisition of a pony carriage and speeding home with renewed energy, roused her 'parson's man' from tea in his cottage, and ordered him off to take Betty Reynolds to see her daughter without loss of time.

Then at length she opened her own gate and walked in at the drawing-room window. Terry started up from the sofa, and Anne from a chair by his side, exclaiming at her appearance, and asking if there had been any accident.

'Not to any of us, but to a poor woman whom I have been taking to the Infirmary,' she said, sinking into a low chair. 'Where's Julius?'

'He went to see old George Willett,' said Anne. 'The poor old man has just heard of the death of his daughter at Wilsbro'.'

'And you came to sit with this boy, you good creature. How are you, master?'

'Oh, better, thanks,' he said, with a weary stretch. 'How done up you look, Rose. How did you come?'

'I walked from Wilsbro'.'

'Walked!' echoed both her hearers.

'Walked! I liked my two legs better than the four of the horse that brought me there, though 'twasn't his fault, poor beast, but the brute of a driver, whom we'll have up before the magistrate. I've got the name; doing his best to dislocate every bone in the poor thing's body. Well, and I hope baby didn't disturb you.'

'Baby has been wonderfully quiet. Julius went to see after her once, but she was out.'

'I'll go and see the young woman, and then come and tell my story.'

But Rosamond came back almost instantly, exclaiming, 'Emma must have taken baby to the Hall. I wish she would be more careful. The sun is getting low, and there's a fog rising.'

'She had not been there when I came down an hour ago,' said Anne; 'at least, not with Mrs. Poyntsett. They may have had her in the house-keeper's room. I had better go and hasten her home.'

Julius came in shortly after, but before he had heard the tale of Fanny Reynolds, Anne had returned to say that neither child nor nurse had been at the Hall, nor passed the large gate that morning. It was growing rather alarming. The other servants said Emma had taken the baby out as usual in the morning, but had not returned to dinner, and they too had supposed her at the Hall. None of the dependants of the Hall in the cottages round know anything of her, but at last Dilemma Hornblower imparted that she had seen my lady's baby's green cloak atop of a tax-cart going towards Wilsbro'.

Now, Emma had undesirable relations, and Rosamond had taken her in spite of warning that her uncle was the keeper of the 'Three Pigeons.' The young parents stood looking at one another, and Rosamond faintly said, 'If that girl has taken her to the races!'

'I am more afraid of that fever in Water Lane,' said Julius. 'I have a great mind to take the pony carriage and see that the girl does not take her there.'

'Oh! I sent it with Betty Reynolds,' cried Rosamond in an agony.

At that moment the Hall carriage came dashing up, and as Raymond saw the three standing in the road, he called to the coachman to stop, for he and his friend were now within, and Cecil leaning back, looking much tired. Raymond's eager question was what Rosamond had done with her charge.

'Left her at the Infirmary; but, oh! you've not seen baby?'

'Seen—seen what! your baby?' asked Raymond as if he thought Rosamond's senses astray, while his bachelor friend was ready to laugh at a young mother's alarms, all the more when Julius answered, 'It is too true; the baby and her nurse have not been seen here since ten o'clock; and we are seriously afraid the girl may have been beguiled to those races. There is a report of the child's cloak having been seen on a tax-cart.'

'Then it was so,' exclaimed Cecil, starting forward. 'I saw a baby's mantle of that peculiar green, and it struck me that some farmer's wife had been aping little Julia's.'

'Where? When?' cried Rosamond.

'They passed us, trying to find a place. I did not show it to you, for you were talking to those gentlemen.'

'Did you see it, Brown?' asked Julius, going towards the coachman. 'Our baby and nurse, I mean.'

'I can't tell about Miss Charnock, sir,' said the coachman, 'but I did think I remarked two young females with young Gadley in a tax-cart. I would not be alarmed, sir, nor my lady,' he added with the freedom of a confidential servant, who, like all the household, adored Lady Rosamond. 'It was a giddy thing in the young woman to have done; and no place to take the young lady to. But there—there were more infants there than a man could count, and it stands to reason they come to no harm.'

'The most sensible thing that has been said yet,' muttered the friend; but Rosamond was by no means pacified. 'Gadley's cart! They'll go to that horrid public-house in Water Lane where there's typhus and diphtheria, and everything; and there's this fog—and that girl will never wrap her up. Oh! why did I ever go?'

'My dear Rose,' said Julius, trying to speak with masculine composure, 'this is nonsense. Depend upon it, Emma is only anxious to get her home.'

'I don't know! I don't know. If she could take her to the races, she would be capable of taking her anywhere! They all go and drink at

that beer shop, and catch——Julius, the pony carriage! Oh! it's gone!

'Yes,' said Julius in explanation. 'She sent Betty Reynolds into Wilsbro' in it.'

'Get in Rosamond,' cried Cecil, 'we will drive back till we find her.'

But this was more than a good coachman could permit for his horses' sake, and Brown declared they must be fed and rested before the ball. Cecil was ready to give up the ball, but still they could not be taken back at once; and Rosamond had by this time turned as if setting her face to walk at once to the race ground until she found her child, when Raymond said, 'Rose! would you be afraid to trust to King Coal and me? I would put him in at once and drive you till you find Julia.'

'Oh! Raymond, how good you are!'

The coachman, glad of this solution, only waited to pick up Anne, and hurried on his horses, while the bachelor friend could not help grunting a little, and observing that it was plain there was only one child in the family, and that he would take any bet 'it' was at home all right long before Poyntsett reached the parsonage.

'May be so,' said Raymond, 'but I would do anything rather than leave her mother in the distress you take so easily.'

'Besides, there's every chance of her being taken to that low public-house,' said Cecil. 'One that Mr. Poyntsett would not allow our servants to go to during the bazaar, though it is close to the town hall, and all the others did.'

'Let us hope that early influence may prevent contamination,' solemnly said the friend.

Cecil turned from him. 'I still hope she may be at home,' she said; 'it is getting very chill and foggy. Raymond, I hope you may not have to go.'

'You must lie down and get thoroughly rested,' he said, as he helped her out, and only waiting to equip himself for the evening dance, he hurried to the stables to expedite the harnessing of the powerful and fiery steed which had as yet been only experimentally driven by himself and the coachman.

Rosamond was watching, and when King Coal was with difficulty pulled up, she made but one spring to the seat of the dog-cart; and Julius, who was tucking in the rug, had to lean back to save his foot, so instantaneous was the dash forward. They went like the wind, Rosamond not caring to speak, and Raymond had quite enough on his hands to be glad not to be required to talk, while he steered through the numerous vehicles they met, and she scanned them anxiously for the outline of Emma's hat. At last they reached Wilsbro'; where, as they came to the entrance of Water Lane, Rosamond, through the hazy gaslight, declared that she saw a tax-cart at the door of the Three Pigeons, and Raymond, albeit uncertain whether it were *the* tax-cart, could only turn down the lane at her bidding, with difficulty preventing King Coal from running his nose into the vehicle. Something like an infant's cry

was heard through the open door, and before he knew what she was about, Rosamond was on the pavement and rushed into the house; and while he was signing to a man to take the horse's head, she was out again, the gaslight catching her eyes so that they glared like a tigress's, her child in her arms, and a whole Babel of explaining tongues behind her. How she did it neither she nor Raymond ever knew, but in a second she had flown to her perch, saying hoarsely, 'Drive me to Dr. Worth's. They were drugging her. I don't know whether I was in time. No, not a word'—(this to those behind)—'never let me see any of you again.'

King Coal prevented all further words of explanation by dancing round, so that Raymond was rejoiced at finding that nobody was run over. They were off again instantly, while Rosamond vehemently clasped the child, which was sobbing out a feeble sound, as if quite spent with crying, but without which the mother seemed dissatisfied, for she moved the poor little thing about if it ceased for a moment. They were soon within Dr. Worth's iron gates, where Raymond could give the horse to a servant, help his sister-in-law down, and speak for her, for at first she only held up the phial she had clutched, and gazed at the doctor speechlessly.

He looked well both at the bottle and the baby, while Raymond spoke, and then said, 'Are you sure she took any, Lady Rosamond?'

'Quite, quite sure!' cried Rosamond. 'The spoon was at her lips, the dear little helpless darling!'

'Well, then,' said the doctor, drily, 'it only remains to be proved whether an aristocratic baby can bear popular treatment. I dare say some hundred unlucky infants have been lugged out to the racecourse to-day, and come back squalling their hearts out with fatigue and hunger, and I'll be bound that nine-tenths are lulled with this very sedative, and will be none the worse.'

'Then you do not think it will hurt her?'

'So far from it, that under the circumstances, it was the best thing she could have. She has plainly been exhausted, and though I would not exactly recommend the practice in your nursery, I doubt if she could have taken nourishment till she had been composed. She will sleep for an hour or two, and by that time you can get her home, and feed her as usual. I should be more anxious about Lady Rosamond herself,' he added, turning to Raymond. 'She looks completely worn out. Let me order you a basin of soup.'

But Rosamond would not hear of it, she must get baby home directly. Raymond advised a fly, but it was recollected that none were attainable between the races and the ball, so the little one was muffled in shawls and cloaks, almost to suffocation, and the doctor forced a glass of wine on her mother, and promised to look in the next day. Still they had a delay at the door, caused by the penitent Emma and her aunt, bent on telling how far they had been from intending any harm; how Emma, when carrying the baby out, had been over-persuaded by the cousins she had

never disappointed before ; how they had faithfully promised to take her home early, long before my lady's return ; how she had taken baby's bottle, but how it had got broken ; how impossible it had been to move off the ground in the throng ; and how the poor baby's inconsolable cries had caused the young nurse to turn aside to see whether her aunt could find anything to prevent her from screaming herself into convulsions.

Nothing but the most determined volubility on Mrs. Gadley's part could have poured this into the ears of Raymond ; Rosamond either could not or would not heed, pushed forward, past the weeping Emma, and pulled away her dress with a shudder, when there was an attempt to draw her back and make her listen.

'Don't, girl,' said Raymond. 'Don't you see that Lady Rosamond can't attend to you? If you have anything to say, you must come another time. You've done quite enough mischief for the present.'

'Yes,' said the doctor, 'tell your brother to put them both to bed, and keep them quiet. I should like to prescribe the same for you, Mr. Poyndsett, you don't look the thing, and I suppose you are going to take the ball by way of remedy.'

Raymond thanked the doctor, but was too much employed in enveloping his passengers to make further reply.

It was quite dark, and the fog had turned to misty rain, soft and still, but all pervading, and Rosamond found it impossible to hold up an umbrella, as well as to guard the baby, who was the only passenger not soaked and dripping by the time they were among the lighted windows of the village.

'Oh, Raymond! Raymond!' she then said, in a husky dreamy voice, 'how good and kind you have been. I know there was something that would make you very, very glad!'

'Is there?' he said. 'I have not met with anything to make me glad for a long time past!'

'And I don't seem able to recollect what it was, or even if I ought to tell,' said Rosamond, in the same faint bewildered voice, which made Raymond very glad they were at the gate, where stood Julius.

But before Rosamond would descend into her husband's arms, she opened all her child's muffings, saying, 'Kiss her, kiss her, Raymond—how she shall love you!' And when he had obeyed, and Rosamond had handed the little one down to her father, she pressed her own wet cheek against his dripping beard and moustache, and exclaimed, 'I'll never forget your goodness. Have you got her safe, Julius? I'll never, never go anywhere again!'

(To be continued.)

A YORK AND A LANCASTER ROSE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'JANET'S HOME.'

CHAPTER XV.

THE CLOSET WINDOW.

FLORENCE'S hasty visit to the drawing-room was not noticed, and it did not recur to Rose's mind, even when, in the course of the evening, her father noticed a vacancy in one of the drawing-room book-cases, and wondered whether Aunt Rachel or Mrs. Fanshawe had borrowed one of the books. He never thought of the forbidden books being touched by the children. Yet Florence had been guilty of this act of disobedience; and at the moment when the Professor made his remark in the drawing-room she was taking a well-bound red book from under a heap of doll's clothes, and wondering where she could best enjoy the stolen pleasure, that in a sort of desperation at what she called her own misfortunes she had snatched at for herself. Anne had gone down-stairs to fetch the water for the children's evening baths, and nurse had taken the three little ones to bid mamma good-night, she was secure of being alone for ten minutes, and if she could establish herself in a judicious place she might be left still longer undisturbed. Nurse had a quick eye for things out of place, but was less likely to spy out a forbidden book than anything else taken without leave. The day-nursery had three doors, one of which opened on to a light closet, which all the children coveted, as an indoor home, beyond any other 'corner' of the house. They liked it, partly because nurse could seldom be persuaded to allow them to bring books or work there, and partly because its one slip of a window commanded a view into a back street and a stable-yard, which could only be had from two other windows in the house, and those high staircase windows, filled with stained glass. Florence now took her book into this most desirable retreat, climbed on to a low table under the window, where nurse did her ironing, and settled herself so as to catch the full light on her page. Nothing could be more comfortable, it ought to have been the perfection of enjoyment, for this book was very interesting, and no one came near her, and she read on and on, sometimes growing really absorbed, but oftenest feeling, all through the reading, an uneasy sense of discomfort and a gnawing anxiety, that took all zest from the pleasure, and made it so nearly pain that it was wonderful she went on imposing it on herself. Nurse came back to the nursery, and put the children to bed, without thinking of her, and it had grown so dusk that she was obliged to hold the book close to the window to make out the words, when she heard her mother's voice, calling:

'Florence! Where are you, dear child?'

'Where are you, Florence?'—that was papa speaking.

Florence slid from the table, thrust the book under nurse's ironing-flannel, and came back into the nursery, feeling very much frightened and ashamed. It was a relief that the nursery was so dark—mamma could hardly see her. Yet, what a shame it seemed to be trembling and shaking at the sound of mamma's kind voice—poor mamma!—who had climbed the steep nursery stairs on purpose to kiss her before she went to bed.

'My dear!' said mamma, gently, 'what made you shut yourself up in nurse's closet, while the little ones were being bathed and put to bed? I should have thought you would have liked to look on. Rose and Maggie think it such a treat to be allowed in the night-nursery at bed-time.'

'I did not know the children were being put to bed. I have been in the closet a long time,' said Florence, in a low voice, that sounded sullen.

'Reading some nice story-book, I dare say,' interposed papa, cheerfully; 'if it was one of the old marble-backed set that came from Scotland, I will forgive you, Flo, for forgetting everything else. Come, show it me, and I'll tell you if it is one of my old favourites.'

It was not often that Professor Ingram spoke in that easy familiar way to one of the middle-aged children, and Florence felt that the cheerful look and cordial words were meant to make up for his glance of contempt when she was crying; that *had* been worse to her than a boot thrown at her head. How she wished she could have responded with a piece of confidence, that might have begun a habit of talking to her father as freely as Rose now talked. As it was, she poked her chin into her neck, and mumbled:

'It was getting too dark to read. I had not been reading much just before you came in.'

'Looking out of the window, and inventing stories about the children in the back street then, eh?'

'Yes,' stammered Florence, in a voice that even to herself sounded horridly sulky. She had not meant to tell an untruth, yet here one had slipped out, and she did not know how to recall it; for already her father had turned away, with a look on his face that said as plainly as words could say:

'What is one to do with such a sullen child?'

And her mother, to put an end to the disagreeable display she was making of herself, stooped down and kissed her hastily.

'Good-night, my dear. I must not stay; I came upstairs because I was anxious to see you before I went to bed; but I am very tired, and ought not to stand about. You will gargle your throat carefully, and do all nurse bids you, won't you, love?'

A low sulky-sounding 'Yes' was all Florence could bring herself to speak, and how often the remembrance of her own cold tones, and unresponsive kiss, came back in moments of anxiety and bitter regrets afterwards. While she was crying herself to sleep in bed that night, she thought she would not open the red-backed book again; but the next day, when her throat had been pronounced worse, and strict orders laid

upon her not to come near the other children, she began to long again for the forbidden excitement, which seemed the only one within her reach, and harder to turn away from, now that she had so thoroughly tasted it. Nurse's little devices for her amusement, such as setting her to dust the old doll's house, and to wash the tea-service that had never been properly put away since Lilly's birthday, afforded her very poor satisfaction, and could not be lengthened out over more than half-an-hour of the long morning, and when Rose sent up the grey merino frock, cleansed from ink stains, and ready to be finished, she turned away in disgust from the thought of beginning upon the tedious tucks all alone, with no one to join her in grumbling at them. Nurse was sitting in the night-nursery with the little ones, to keep them from coming round Florence, and no one seemed disposed to notice what she did; she would at all events take the book from under nurse's ironing-flannel and put it in a safer place. Once in the closet, with the book in her hand, it seemed impossible not to go further. She opened at the place where she had left off last night, and stood for nearly half-an-hour turning page after page, while hardly acknowledging to herself that she was reading. At last, coming to a point of absorbing interest, she abandoned all pretence of intending to leave off in a minute, and sitting herself on the table, made up her mind to hurry on to the end, and set her curiosity at rest. Nurse came into the closet once or twice during the morning, to look into the closets for something she wanted, and then Florence, more from a guilty conscience than from any real fear of being questioned, slipped her book under her apron, and pretended to be amusing herself by looking out of the little window. On one of these occasions, she saw something that startled her. Her eye fell on four boys, who were playing at marbles in the stable-yard, which the little window overlooked. High as she was perched above them, she could distinguish them plainly, and she first suspected, and then felt sure, that one of them was Lionel. That certainly was his blue cap, and as he looked round she saw his face plainly. Yes, and the tallest of the boys, the one who was now leaning against the stable-door, and tossing something in the air, while the others looked on, was James Packer, that eldest son of Packer's, who used once to be allowed to come about the house, and even occasionally to join the boys in their kite-flying excursions, but who, for some unexplained reason, had lately, by strict orders from Professor Ingram, been cut off from all intercourse with the household. How could Lionel have got leave to play with him again, and in the stable-yard too, where mamma so particularly disliked him to go?

Florence puzzled herself with this question till nurse left the room, and she drew her book from its concealment to begin to read again, and then it flashed across her that there was such a thing as doing as one likes without leave. If she found it so easy, why not Lionel? And mamma ill, and papa anxious and unhappy all the while. It seemed a very bad thing to do, yet somehow or other one went on. There remained only five chapters to the end of the book. Florence said to herself that it

would be best surely to finish, and get the wonder about the end fairly out of her mind, so that she might forget the whole matter, and make up for one act of disobedience by scrupulous attention in the future. She hurried on, therefore, turning over the leaves breathlessly, but all enjoyment was over, for her understanding of what she read was disturbed by a vision of 'Lazy Lawrence' that kept coming before her mind. She saw him seated on the horse-block, playing at pitch-and-toss with the 'stable-boy,' and being led on by bad companionship to cock-fights, and a prison in the end. If Lionel should be beguiled to like courses by Packer's son, and mamma be made very ill through grief at hearing it, how should she answer for not having given warning? When she had turned the last leaf, and read the last sentences, a terrible feeling of disenchantment and flatness came. The latter half of the book had really been beyond her comprehension, and now that there was nothing more to come, she wondered how she could have cared to read it, burdening herself with so much remorse for such a short-lived doubtful pleasure. The only thing worth caring about now, was how to get the horrid book back in its place without being questioned about it, and forced to make any more false excuses. Her head ached badly, the consequence of her having spent the entire morning in rapid reading; and after dinner, nurse sent her to lie down in the night-nursery, while Anne took the little ones out for a walk.

While they were away nurse had a visitor, a friend of her own, with whom she soon fell into eager confidential conversation. The door between the night and day nurseries had been left open. Florence thought of getting up to shut it several times, as the buzz of voices made her head ache, but after a while a word or two of nurse's friend fixed her attention, and she could not help listening to the end.

'As bad as a boy can be of his age! do you say? Well, well, no doubt you did right in speaking out, but poor Mr. Packer, I feel for him. Of course, as you say, he ought to look after his son; but when there's no mother what can one expect? I never could be hard on a motherless boy.'

The answer came in Nurse Lewis's most emphatic voice.

'And I'd no wish to be hard on the boy, Mrs. Jones; it's not likely I should, having knowed him from a baby; but when I saw that he was doing harm to them that have a mother yet—to break her heart if they go wrong, but who mayn't have her long, though little they think it—all the ill-will that my fellow-servants can put upon me shouldn't have kept me from doing as my conscience bid me.'

'So you spoke about it to the Master himself, and the boy has been forbid the house, you say, and Mr. Packer naturally very much put about, having always looked to his son's coming in as foot-boy under him. I only hope it's all going on straightforward now. I can't hear anything of the boy's being sent into the country as Mr. Packer promised, and the neighbours do talk about his hanging round in the stable-yard day after day doing no good.'

'So long as our young gentlemen keep clear of him, it's no concern of mine,' answered nurse; 'and I can't think so badly of Master Lionel as that he would disobey his papa's orders just now, when his poor mamma is as ill as ever she can be, and his papa so anxious—for master's eyes are opened at last, and not before time I say.'

'You think very badly of Mrs. Ingram then, I'm afraid, nurse.'

There was a little doleful sound, which as Florence knew, always accompanied nurse's most foreboding shakes of the head, and then—

'Shut that door, Mrs. Jones, behind you, and I'll tell you what I've seen coming plainly enough this long time, while others have chosen to think different.'

The door was shut, and Florence, who had sat up in the bed, threw herself back and buried her face deep in the pillow, trembling all over.

Oh, what could it mean? *what* was it that nurse had foreseen, while she was attending only to her own concerns, and even sometimes thinking discontented thoughts of papa and mamma and disobeying their orders? An answer came, but it was so dreadful Florence could not bear to let it enter her mind. 'Oh no, no! nurse could not have meant *that*.' To be sure, she had said 'Those that have a mother now, but mayn't have her long;' but, oh no, no! she could not be foreseeing a terrible time to come upon them, when they would have no mother to care what they did. She would not surely have spoken so quietly if she had meant *that*; she would not let them all go on neglecting mamma's wishes (Florence had given a great deal of trouble that morning by refusing to gargle her throat); worrying her, too, with noises and fusses about trifles, if she really thought a time was coming soon when there would be no mother in the house to consider and obey.

Surely people were warned of such dangers as that; then Florence remembered Lucy Fanshawe's regret at having lost an opportunity of pleasing her father, which never came again; and like a sting the thought came 'If mamma should never be well enough for me to tell her of my disobedience these holidays about the red book! What shall I do, if I have to remember all my life that I disobeyed her when she was ill, and never got her pardon?' It was not yet too late. Florence might have gone that moment into her mother's room and confessed all. Her mother would not be angry, she knew, but perhaps she would turn paler than ever, and put her hand on her heart as she did when anything agitated her, and then papa would look very stern and begin to question her, and perhaps all about Lionel would come out. She believed she ought not to hide what she had seen, but then, if through her such a history of misdoing was disclosed, things would be very miserable for all the rest of the holidays, and the others would reproach her for putting herself in a place where she had been forced to act as spy. She could not make up her mind to face all this pain and blame.

Florence had hitherto prided herself on her honesty, and though

reserved and sullen tempered, she had never been guilty of deception, but now self-will and self-pleasing were leading her into faults repugnant to her character.

She stayed tossing about on her bed in a wretched state of indecision till Anne came to call her to tea. Anne saw that she had been crying, and remarked as she combed out her hair and straightened her frock that for her part she did hate having to do with piny-whiny children, who fretted when they had everything they could want to make them happy; such had a deal better keep their tears till the time when they would have something real to cry for.

Could Anne, when she said this, be thinking of the same thing as nurse had hinted at? Florence felt quite miserable as she crept to her place at the tea-table, and said to herself that as things were so bad already she could not bear to make them worse for herself and others by telling tales.

After tea Florence took the red book and stood at the nursery-door watching for an opportunity of slipping down to the drawing-room and restoring it to its place. Soon she saw Lionel at the end of the passage, having just come up from the back staircase, and she beckoned him to come and speak to her.

'Well, what do you want?' asked Lionel, not over pleased at being waylaid. 'I thought you had a sore throat, and must not speak to any of us.'

'Oh just for a minute I may. I want to know if any one is in the drawing-room just now?'

'Mrs. Fanshawe is there talking to papa; but what is the row? what is that to you? You don't want to go there yourself I suppose?'

'Not particularly,' said Florence, stammering; and Lionel at first surprised caught sight of the book in her hand, and uttered a loud somewhat contemptuous

'Oh, that's it! you've been helping yourself to a book without leave and you want me to smuggle it back into its place. No thank you, I've enough scrapes of my own to answer for.'

'No, I don't,' said Florence, putting the book behind her; 'I did not call you for that. I don't want to get you into a scrape, Lionel, I want to tell you that I saw you from the closet window with Jim Packer; and oh, Lionel! I am afraid you were playing at pitch and toss, like the stable boy and Lazy Lawrence.'

'Rubbish,' cried Lionel, who had, however, turned very red. 'I never played at pitch and toss in my life. Shows what rubbish you get into your head, and that you'd better mind your own business.'

'But you were in the stable-yard with Jim Packer.'

'What then? What business has a little girl like you to spy on her brother? I was doing no harm.'

'Oh Lionel! I was not spying. I saw you from the window when I was reading in nurse's closet.'

‘Ah, yes ; reading one of mamma’s books !’

‘Oh, Lionel, I do so wish you would not——’

‘Do what ? You had better know a little more before you cook up a fine story against me to make your own disobedience seem a trifle.’

‘You know I would not do that, but, Lionel, while mamma is so ill——’

‘Much you have thought of that. Why, it was your screaming the other day and the fuss over you and your throat that has made her so much worse that she can’t take the drives papa and Aunt Rachel hoped so much from. Papa has just been saying so to Mrs. Fanshawe.’

‘But, Lionel, if mamma got to know that you played with Jim Packer.’

‘Oh, if you choose to make another fuss of course you’ll do her a great deal more harm ; and who says anything about my *playing* with Jim ? as if we were a couple of babies like yourself. If I go into the yard to look for Packer and find Jim standing about, can I order him out of the place, I should like to know ?’

‘But you were there half-an-hour.’

‘Waiting for Packer.’

‘Lionel, don’t go yet, I want to say one more thing. Suppose mamma were very ill, so ill that people are afraid she may not get better ?’

‘Nonsense,’ cried Lionel, starting and turning pale, however, while he tried to look angry. ‘You say it to frighten me. You *can’t* believe it yourself or you never would take *her* books without leave, and slip down on the sly to hide them. You need not trouble yourself to preach to me after I have seen that—thank you.’

Lionel turned and walked away as he spoke, and Florence, after standing for some time longer at the door, undecided what to do, went back into the nursery and hid her book again in the toy-cupboard.

DISOBEDIENT CECIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF ‘MRS. JERNINGHAM’S JOURNAL.’

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE next morning Cecil rose with renewed hopes and spirits. It is wonderful how different our night thoughts are from those that come to us in the morning. Is it sleep, or is it sunshine, that is the cause of this ? Be that as it may, the fact is the same, and Cecil rejoiced when she found how much more cheerful a view of life she took when she opened her eyes and saw the bright frost flowers glittering in the sunshine on the window-pane, than that which had depressed her spirit before she closed them in slumber the previous night. Uncle James’s power seemed so slight now in comparison with what it had been then, and her means of evading his tyranny so many and so great, that she

laughed at herself for having felt frightened or discouraged. And as to being unhappy, how could it be possible for her to feel unhappy with the prospect before her of meeting Juliet that very day, and the belief that she should accompany her to a ball in less than a week! Yes, it was less than a week now. Yesterday it had been seven days—to-day it was only six. Only six days between her and the ball! Only six hours before her next meeting with Juliet, and she had dared to despond and to fancy herself miserable and helpless! 'It was the worry; it was just the worry of hearing Uncle James going on at me, which influenced me, though I did not know it was that at the time, and made me take gloomy and silly views of everything. Everybody in the house feels him in the same way. I have often seen the servants hardly able to bear him; and he makes Aunt Flora fretful if she has to undergo much of him. I actually succumbed last night to pure worry. There is nothing so depressing as worry, nothing at all.'

Tupper's *Proverbial Philosophy* and the elegant French translation she was expected to make in the course of the next week (the week which preceded the ball!) were not to blame for Cecil's low spirits of the night before, as she had not yet commenced her task, and the meditation in which her uncle had advised her to pass some time had been of a very different nature from that which he had intended. She dressed herself gaily, not feeling in the least like a person in disgrace, and paid Helen a visit before she went down stairs to breakfast. Helen looked poorly, but she said her cold was certainly better than on the previous day, and she hoped she might get up in the evening and have tea in the schoolroom. She inquired very anxiously about all that had happened, and was frightened and sorry when she heard of the disgrace Cecil was in, and the extent of her father's anger; but she quite agreed that Cecil could not give up Mrs. Wyndham. 'But you *must* not seek her,' she urged; 'and you must not drive with her. Those drives are immense events, and have never been dreamed of as possible. There *cannot* be any hardship in not driving with people, and you must be content with the little accidental meetings which a few days ago made you perfectly happy, and were all that you thought could happen, and therefore all that you expected and wished for.'

'Ah! but there it is, *and therefore*,' replied Cecil, shaking her head.

'Dear Cecil, do take care.'

'But she reckons on me, Helen. Think of that—she trusts to me; and looks to me to console her during her colonel's absence. Can I disappoint her? When it is so very, very delightful to me to find that she regards me in that light, how will it be possible for me to disappoint her? And it will be really wrong too. It would be a sin against friendship.'

'Of course you cannot sin against friendship,' replied Helen, but not heartily, or in a tone of conviction.

'I should think not! and if you come to duty, Helen, you will hardly mean to say that there is not a duty to a friend as well as to an

uncle. You appear to me to want to make out that one's duty to one's uncle is everything. But why should it be so? A friend surely, in every sense and every way, is a higher thing than an uncle, and one has duties to a friend of a very high nature indeed.'

'Cecil,' replied Helen, earnestly, 'you *must* have a duty to papa, because he is your guardian, and you live in his house, and I really don't see that you have any duty towards Mrs. Wyndham at all.'

Cecil shook her head impatiently.

'If you really don't see that, Helen,' she cried with a good deal of melancholy in her voice, 'there is no use in discussing the subject. We never could agree; but I am so much disappointed, and so very sorry. You cannot in the least understand anything that I feel; there is no sympathy between us, and it would be better for me not to speak to you about Juliet at all.'

'O my darling Cecil,' cried poor Helen in dismay and distress, 'pray, pray, don't say that, you know that it is not the case. You can't think that it is; you know I understand and sympathise. It was not duties of that sort I meant. Of course there are duties of friendship, and *those* you owe to Juliet; but it was not that at all I meant, not in the least. Please don't think that it was; it was only just that if papa said expressly you were not to drive with her or seek her, I thought you might perhaps manage to keep from doing those sort of things *much*. I do hope you understand.'

Cecil kissed her.

'I understand you better than you understand yourself,' she said, 'The fact is you really agree with me, it is impossible but what you should; but you have some old-fashioned notions—childish ideas—of which you can't get rid; and these confuse you so very much that you keep fancying we are doing wrong, when we are really quite right, only it is conventional to say that we are not; but I do hope, Helen, that you will never be conventional.'

'No,' replied Helen very gravely, 'I hope I never shall.'

She was comforted by Cecil's kiss and words, and as usual yielded to the eager force of her character, but she was not satisfied, and her reflections, when left alone, were by no means happy. Suppose the old ideas were right and Cecil's wrong, how very wrong everything that Cecil was now doing must be, and how strange it was that one so good as Cecil could be doing wrong and feeling wrong without knowing it! How sad it was to be always obliged to be disobeying and concealing; whether it was wrong or whether it was right it was a very dissatisfying sort of life, and the lives led by girls in other houses where such things did not happen must surely be far happier. Here she thought a good deal about the Lesters, and wondered how it was with them, with a feeling approaching very nearly to envy. What would they think of Cecil if they knew what she did, and how she felt about these matters? What would they say in reply to the opinions she so often expressed,

and which sometimes entirely convinced Helen, but sometimes also left her in the state of uncertainty she now suffered from, only generally she had plenty to do and no time for reflection, but to-day, confined to her bed by a cold, thought got the mastery over her, and she felt at once puzzled and unhappy. 'I should like very much,' she reflected, 'to have some talk with the Lesters on these matters, and to find out what they would think about it all, if it was possible to do so without betraying Cecil. It is so odd that while Cecil dislikes them so much I can't make myself, though I really try, dislike them at all. Cecil and I used to feel alike about everything, and now there are so many things that we don't seem as if we took the same view of. I *wish* it was not so. I *wish* we were still as we were two or three years ago when we were only children. If this is growing up, I do think it would be much nicer not to grow up at all!'

Mademoiselle agreed willingly enough to walk with Cecil the very minute dinner was over. She appeared rather restless herself, and as if she did not find it as easy as usual to settle to her schoolroom duties, and though she groaned and shook her head at the snow outside, and murmured against the English climate, she equipped herself in becoming attire to brave it, and was ready for the walk, even before Cecil was, and waiting for her in the hall.

They had been gone some time when word was brought to Helen that Miss Lester had called, and wished to know if she should like to see her, and if she might come up stairs. Helen felt extremely pleased though a little frightened, and gladly sent the required permission, which brought Adela Lester to her bedside, with the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* in her hand.

'You wanted to read this,' she said, 'and I was so glad to bring it to you. May I stay a little? Can you talk? or will it do you harm?'

'Oh no, it will do me good. It was very kind of you to remember; and I want to see you. Cecil is out. She and Mademoiselle are walking.'

'Yes, I met them near Byfield. At least I met Miss Vaux and Mrs. Wyndham, but I did not see Mademoiselle.'

Helen's face flushed a little.

'Oh I am glad,' she said; 'Cecil is happy if she meet Mrs. Wyndham. But where could Mademoiselle be?'

'There was a figure that looked just like her crossing some fields near,' said Adela; 'but I thought it could not be Mademoiselle because she was with Captain Feversham. I thought it was her at first, and that the person with her, whom I hardly distinguished, must be your cousin, but I very soon saw that it was a man, and Captain Feversham. Almost directly afterwards I met Miss Vaux and Mrs. Wyndham in the lane.'

'I have no doubt that it was Mademoiselle then,' said Helen; 'but

how very odd ! What could make her go across the fields, and what a queer thing it is that she is so fond of walking with Captain Feversham. He seems to us so silly ; and why Mademoiselle does not think so too is quite a wonder.'

Adela looked rather uncomfortable.

'Does Mr. Vaux know ?' she asked.

'No. I wish he did. He would not approve of it at all. And if he discovered it, he might perhaps send her away, and we should be glad. For she is not what papa thinks in any way. At least I believe she teaches us well enough, but he fancies she is very good and sincere, and she is not that at all. He is completely deceived in her.'

'I wonder you do not tell him.'

'He would not believe me ; he would think I was in some way to blame, not Mademoiselle, because he has such a high opinion of her.'

Adela said nothing to that. She felt uncomfortable, as if she did not clearly understand the position which these different members of a family occupied towards one another, and therefore as if the wisest thing she could do was to hold her tongue. It is curious how often this *would* be the wisest thing that could be done, and yet how very seldom people do it, though one might imagine that *not* to speak was not so very difficult, whatever speaking may be.

Helen broke the silence by asking rather abruptly, 'Do you *like* Mrs. Wyndham, Miss Lester ?'

Adela hesitated a minute before she replied, and then said, 'I think her extremely pretty and elegant.'

'Yes, is she not ? Cecil considers there is nobody to compare with her in the world, and she is charming. But don't you like knowing her—don't you think anybody might like knowing her ?'

'I am not sure,' replied Adela, slowly ; 'we don't know her well, you see. In fact we only know her a very little, and I think mamma does not wish us to be intimate.'

'But would not you like it ? Don't you try to see as much of her as ever you can ?'

'No indeed,' replied Adela, smiling, and speaking quite frankly now. 'I never think about *that*. It never occurred to me to see her oftener than I do ; why should it ?'

'Well it does to us. Is it not very strange, Miss Lester, that papa does not want us to know her *at all* ? He will not call on Colonel Wyndham, though he likes him, merely on account of his wife ; so that is worse, you see, than Mrs. Lester.'

Adela could not help laughing while she said with gay good humour,

'But you must not speak of it in that way—indeed you mustn't. Worse than mamma ! Why of course mamma has some very good reason, and no doubt Mr. Vaux has also.'

'Oh no, he has not ; he won't call, and he is very angry at our having made acquaintance with her. Now why *can* it be that they all feel about

her like *that*, when she is so very charming, and I really think she is very good too ?'

'Is she ? I am so glad, for she is very pretty, and mamma will be glad too. But don't you think you ought to tell her Mr. Vaux does not wish you to be with her ?'

'Tell her ? Oh we have, but she only laughs. She is good-hearted and does not mind it a bit.'

'But she ought not to let your cousin drive and walk with her.'

'Ought she not ? Oh, you really think she ought not ?'

Adela felt quite distressed.

'Why of course she ought not, dear Miss Vaux. It cannot be right. Do you not think so ?' she added deprecatingly, sorry to find herself in this position, and yet feeling that it would be very wrong not to speak truly.

'Miss Lester,' cried Helen, sitting up in her bed and addressing her earnestly, 'that is just what I am thinking so much about. It is so very uncomfortable to be always doing what papa tells us not. Cecil says obedience is nonsense, and that he has no right really to order us, and we are not bound to attend ; but it is very uncomfortable disobeying him and tricking him, we used not to do it when we were little. But what I want to know is, do all girls do it ? Do you and your sister ?'

'Oh no—indeed no,' cried Adela, quite shocked ; 'we never think of such a thing—how can we ? Of course we always obey mamma. Dear mamma,' she added, blushing deeply and the tears coming into her eyes, 'what would she do if we tricked or disobeyed her !'

'Well,' said Helen, lying down again, 'all I know is, that it is very disagreeable, and that I can't understand it at all.'

'One thing I am *quite* sure of, if you will try not to be angry with me for saying it,' said Adela very gently, 'and that is, that it can't be right to trick *any* one, and that it *must* be wrong to disobey Mr. Vaux.'

'Ah, if you only knew how it all is,' sighed Helen. 'I don't suppose you can have an idea of how it all is. It seems so different from your home. I thought it was, and now I see that it is, so different that you *can't* understand.'

'But one thing we all of us can understand,' said Adela, speaking quite timidly, 'and that is, the commandment to honour our parents.'

'Cecil is much cleverer and better than I am,' said Helen ; 'you have no idea how clever and how good Cecil is.'

Adela saw clearly the logic of this argument, and was painfully conscious how difficult it was to bear witness to the truth without seeming censorious and unkind.

'Perhaps,' she said doubtfully, 'perhaps it has never struck your cousin in that light ; she has not considered what she is really doing, and if she thought about it she would act quite differently.'

'You told of her yesterday,' replied Helen a little reproachfully ; 'she was vexed about that.'

‘I told of her?’

‘Yes, you told papa that she had gone off with Mrs. Wyndham.’

‘Oh, I know what you mean. I did not clearly understand, and I was not sure about Mrs. Wyndham and Mr. Vaux and your cousin; but I really could not help saying what I did, and I was very sorry. I must have been untrue if I had not told what I did, so I really could not help it.’

‘Yes,’ said Helen, simply, ‘I like you very much, and I am sure you would not be ill-natured.’

Adela stooped down impulsively and kissed Helen’s little face as it lay on the pillow.

‘Thank you, dear,’ she said softly.

Helen returned the kiss with warmth, and then remembered with a pang of remorse that she was kissing Cecil’s cat!

‘Oh how I do wish you would talk to Cecil,’ she cried out eagerly.

Adela shook her head.

‘I could not,’ she said, ‘it would be impertinent and intrusive. I would not have said what I did to you if you had not asked me, and Cecil will never ask me, she does not like me, and I ought not to talk to her as I have been talking to you.’

‘She could tell you just what makes her think she has a right to do it. She could explain it to you and you will perhaps agree that she *has*. She is so clever and so good.’

‘Yes,’ said Adela, softly, ‘I am sure she is; but still you see nothing can alter the commandment. It does not say “honour them if they are honourable,” or “if you agree with them,” but simply: *do it!* It is a very easy commandment to some;’ here she gave a bright little smile, ‘and I daresay it is a very difficult one to others; but *that* does not change the commandment.’

‘No, perhaps not,’ said Helen hesitatingly. ‘But you see it is *impossible* for Cecil to give up Mrs. Wyndham; she has duties to her also—duties of friendship and affection which she cannot neglect.’

‘I don’t want to talk over her conduct one way or the other. It seems so unpleasant for me to come here and do so,’ said Adela, ‘so don’t make me, please; but I am quite, quite sure, that it can’t be right to trick anyone, and that it must be wrong to disobey those who are put in authority over you. We began with that, and it all comes round to that again.’

‘And I can only repeat that I wish you would talk to Cecil. She would explain it all to you, and I can’t—I never could explain,’ said Helen with rather a weary sigh.

Adela smiled kindly at her. ‘I am afraid I have tired you,’ she said.

‘No, you have not; I like talking to you, and I like hearing you talk, and I am very much obliged to you.’

Adela took up the book, ‘I think you will like this,’ she said, ‘it is

so sparkling and fresh, and sweet; do let me read it to you a little; and then she began:—

‘The feast was over in Branksome tower,
And the ladye had gone to her secret bower;
Her bower that was guarded by word and by spell,
Deadly to hear and deadly to tell;
No living wight, save the ladye alone,
Had dared to cross the threshold stone;’

and so on through all the wild and wonderful beauty of the first canto of the most charming poem in the world. Yes, it is thoughtfully said, and the word charming does not mean the grandest, the finest, the deepest, or even, perhaps, the most poetical, but simply what is contained in its own eight letters, CHARMING.

Adela read till the clock striking half-past three reminded her that it would soon be dark and that she must go home.

‘I am so glad you let me come up stairs to you,’ she said; ‘I have liked it so much.’

‘Then think how I must have liked it,’ cried Helen, ‘when I am ill in bed and expected to be alone all this time. And is not that poetry beautiful? I have enjoyed it so! Does it not seem almost too much that the same man should have been able to write *The Talisman* and *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*? Prose and Poetry too!’

‘I suppose only a poet *could* have written *The Talisman*; all the thoughts it excites and the pictures it draws are poetry,’ said Adela.

‘Do you know it is only about two years since I have begun to like poetry—I mean to really care for it. I might like it in a sort of a way if I heard things read, or sung, but not to read it myself or *really* care for it. I always liked prose, and now it seems to me odd that for the whole of my life, except just two years, I have not cared for poetry! Cecil always did, as long as I can recollect, but I did not. It is very odd, is it not?’

‘You must be very glad that you like it now.’

‘Oh yes—am I not glad? I should be quite sorry to go back to the time when I did not. But for that, I think it was better two years ago than it is now. After all, growing up is a very doubtful sort of pleasure.’

‘Is it? I like growing up.’

‘So does Cecil; I think she likes it better than anything else.’

‘How pleasant it is for you to have a cousin just the same age. You would be so lonely without a companion.’

‘I can’t imagine a world with me in it at all, unless it had Cecil in it also,’ was the reply.

‘And you are just the same age too, which is very nice.’

‘Yes! she is only five months older than I am.’

‘In that one respect it is better even than being sisters, unless you happen to be twins. You will always be together in everything. You will go to parties together from the first. Now Lucy is two years younger than I am, so she cannot go to this ball with me, and that makes me enjoy the prospect of it only half as much, I am sure, as I should do, if she were

going too. In another year, you and your cousin will go to parties together.'

'Yes,' said Helen, 'I suppose we shall.'

She spoke in a constrained way and looked at Adela as she did so, but said nothing more than, 'I suppose we shall,' for she felt she must not betray Cecil's secrets to her cat, and she was sure from an unerring instinct that her cat could give her no sympathy in this matter of the ball, but would consider the whole proceeding as very wrong indeed, from first to last and from beginning to end. So she held her tongue, though in doing so she felt uncomfortable and almost insincere.

'I am sure you will enjoy the ball very much though,' she said, after a pause that seemed to her to be an awkward one.

Adela Lester and Helen Vaux parted quite affectionately. Helen asked her timidly if she would come and see her again, which the other promised to do.

'Papa likes us to be with you and your sister,' Helen said; 'he approves of you as much as he disapproves of Mrs. Wyndham, and I am sure I don't know why—at least, I mean,' she added, laughing—'I don't know why he disapproves of her. I quite understand his approving of you, of course, for you are as good as you can be.'

'Oh, no,' said Adela, laughing and blushing, 'you must not say that; but I am very glad your father approves of us, and I shall like to come and see you again very much indeed. In the summer when the days are longer, we may see more of each other. We might walk together, perhaps.'

'Oh, I do think,' cried Helen, 'that you and Cecil must get to like each other. It seems to me as if you really must. When you know each other you can't help it. I *know* nobody can help liking Cecil, and I can't think why they should not like you.'

'I am quite ready to perform my part I assure you,' said Adela, smiling, and so they kissed each other and Adela went away.

In the hall she met Cecil and Mademoiselle returning from their walk. The former with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes, the latter looking rather jaded and tired.

'Miss Lester!' cried Cecil, starting back surprised and displeased. And Adela found herself replying quite apologetically,

'I have been sitting with your cousin. She made me go up stairs to her, and she seemed to like having me as she was alone, and I have been reading to her.'

'Poor Helen,' thought Cecil. 'Reading to her!' she said contemptuously, 'what—the Bible?'

Adela coloured quite painfully.

'No,' she said; 'why should I? She reads that herself. I was reading *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*.'

'I do think you are very inconsistent, Miss Lester,' said Cecil.

'I daresay I am,' replied Adela good-humouredly, though too young

to feel really comfortable under the sort of remark ; 'most people are, and I don't see how I can hope to escape. But why do you think it of me particularly ?'

'Why, to read poetry and novels and go to balls. But never mind. I want to thank you for telling my uncle that I went away with Mrs. Wyndham yesterday. I have been walking with her again to-day ; I have only just returned from walking with her. Now he is in his study, Miss Lester ; that is the door to it just behind you, will you not like to go in and tell him that I have just returned from walking with her ? Shall I knock at it ?—and then he will ask you to come in.'

She made a movement towards the study door, as she spoke, with outstretched hand, which Mademoiselle rapidly caught before it reached it, if she really had any intention of letting it do so.

'Ah *fi donc* !—naughty little,' she cried ; 'let us not make the rows with the uncle whatever we do, or cause the nice young ladee to be shamed with us for our foolish pranks—let us not, pray.'

'Oh, just as you like, Mademoiselle,' replied Cecil lightly ; 'it is all the same to me—but I thought it would please Miss Lester.'

Adela was blushing deeply ; she looked as she felt, greatly distressed, with a sort of bewildered helpless sensation, and the tears stood in her eyes. She was very young and she had never been in the least roughly handled. Beloved and petted, and highly thought of as a good and useful elder daughter of an affectionate family must be, the usage she met with at Cecil's hands was as new as it was disagreeable.

'You do me great injustice,' she said with some spirit, though quite gently, for Adela's was a gentle nature. 'Why do you suppose that I am mean and ill-natured ? why do you dislike me so much, Miss Vaux ? I was obliged to tell your uncle. He was so angry at the idea that you had walked home alone. He questioned me so much. I said nothing about Mrs. Wyndham till I felt it would be insincere not to mention her name. I cannot think why you suspect me of such things.'

'Ah, *chère mees*, mind you not,' cried Mademoiselle, good-naturedly ; 'our Cecile is naughty—naughty. She means no harm : but she knows not quite vat she means. She is of the ages for that ; and we minds her not at all.'

'How can you say so, Mademoiselle,' cried Cecil quite indignantly, 'when you know it is not the case ?'

'I knows nothings,' exclaimed Mademoiselle, 'nothings at all ; except that Mees Lester is a nice young ladee ; and that it is naughty—naughty—to be rudes to her.'

'I did not mean to be rude,' replied Cecil rather ashamed of herself, as the instincts of a well-bred gentlewoman came back to her with a pang of reproach ; 'but really, Miss Lester, it seemed to me that it was quite unnecessary that you should take the trouble of telling my uncle anything about me.'

'I have explained,' said Adela, a little coldly. 'I am sorry if you

think so after I have explained, but I do not know what more to say.'

At that moment the study door opened, and Mr. Vaux came out, and showed some surprise at finding the three together in the hall. He shook hands in a very friendly way with Miss Lester, and said he was always glad to see her. 'But surely,' he added, 'you are not alone?'

No, Adela explained, she was not alone, her maid had walked with her, and was paying a visit to some friends at a cottage within a few yards of the gate, and she would join her again as she returned. She then took leave of Mr. Vaux and Mademoiselle, and held out her hand with a frank smile to Cecil.

'You will shake hands with me, won't you?' she asked in a low voice.

Cecil laid her fingers for an instant on hers rather unwillingly, and without returning the smile.

'Good-bye, Miss Lester,' she said quite aloud; and so they parted.

Mademoiselle De Lys had gone up stairs immediately after wishing Adela good-bye, which enabled Mr. Vaux to blame Cecil for dawdling about in her hat and cloak, and desire her to repair to her own room at once and take them off, which he could hardly have done consistently, if Mademoiselle had still been there, without letting her come in for some share of the blame.

Cecil ought to have returned from her walk with a fund of good humour sufficient to make her gracious even to Adela Lester, for the expedition had been crowned with complete success.

Not far from Byfield they had met Mrs. Wyndham, driving herself in her little carriage. She had flung the reins at once to the page, who sat behind her, and desired him to return to the town, and wait for her at the dressmaker's.

'I have always some errand there, you know,' she said, 'or I can always make an errand. It's so very easy to buy ribbons and lace. Ah, Captain Feversham, how do you do?'

These last words were addressed to that young officer, who sauntered up at the minute, and were accompanied by a bright speaking glance, thrown across him to Cecil. A glance, the meaning of which Cecil did not understand, unless Captain Feversham's appearance was in some way due to manœuvres of her friend, and was not purely accidental. Still she was able to respond to it by a gay smile of congratulation, for she thought it quite lucky he had joined them, as she knew he and Mademoiselle would walk together, and leave her to the free enjoyment of her friend's society.

Captain Feversham shook hands with the ladies all round, and said, in a general way, 'Awfully cold weather for walking.' A remark which elicited the very natural reply from Mrs. Wyndham, that weather awfully cold for everything else was the best possible for walking.

'It was awfully cold driving my little trap, that I admit,' she said;

‘but for walking, it is pleasant enough. Come, Cecil, don’t be lazy; we must walk quickly, and so keep warm.’

‘That’s the shortest way,’ said Captain Feversham, pointing across the fields; ‘a hundred yards shorter than the road to Byfield. I’ve told the colonel so many times, and he won’t believe me.’ And he looked and spoke like an injured man.

‘Let’s put it to the proof,’ cried Juliet, gaily. ‘You and one of these ladies go that way, and I and the other will go this, and let us see which reaches the market-place first. Honour bright—that nobody runs. Come along, Cecil.’

And the two walked quickly down the road, while Captain Feversham, nothing loath, assisted Mademoiselle De Lys over a stile into the fields. And thus it was that Adela Lester, crossing from Byfield a few minutes later, saw the four, and was puzzled and surprised thereby.

‘And if that was not well managed,’ laughed Juliet, ‘ha! ha! ha! My colonel may be a colonel, but I am the best of generals. No doubt of it at all! Have not I managed it capitally, Cecil?’

‘I have no doubt you have. I am sure you always do,’ replied Cecil, affectionately, ‘only I can’t see what management there was in this.’

‘O don’t you!’ cried Juliet with a merry laugh; ‘then I won’t enlighten you, you dear little innocent. I had such a charming note from my colonel this morning,—the dear,—he has promised to write every day, and I am to do the same to him. Oh, I do wonder when he will come back. You can’t imagine what it is to be without him, Cecil.’

‘No, I don’t suppose I can,’ replied Cecil, laughing, ‘because I am always without him. But Juliet, is Diomed dead? Do you know you never told me yesterday whether Diomed is dead?’

‘No—he lives, and I hope and believe he will recover. I go to see him every day, and he likes it. I am quite sure he likes it. He has a grateful expression in his eyes; but he does not know that I saved his life. They talked about shooting him at first, but I would not let them. I entreated them not, and I cried, so that they *had* to give him a reprieve. It always seems to me such a mean shame to kill animals when they are ill, instead of giving them the chance that we have ourselves of coming right again.’

‘They do it out of humanity, I suppose.’

‘A queer humanity, truly! Why don’t men and women do it to each other, then? Why are men and women to suffer and not animals?’

‘I hardly know,’ replied Cecil; ‘but I suppose just because they are men and women—because they have souls.’

‘But that is the worst reason possible, and ought to tell on the other side in favour of the poor beasts. The things with souls go on living if we kill them ever so much; but the poor things without souls die right out, and never live any more anywhere, so that ought to make us more afraid of killing them than of killing the others, ought it not?’

‘But then we are commanded to do no murder.’

'And why is it murder to kill a man, and not to kill a horse or a dog? How do we dare to determine that *that* only is murder? I'll tell you what, Cecil,—man kills animals because they can do it without giving them their choice. You'd have to ask a sick or maimed man if he wished to be killed or not; and depend upon it, however ill he was, or whatever pain he was in, he would say *not*. Now, the poor beasts get no choice given them, but 'are killed right off, at the will of the man, and I do think it is a horrid shame.'

'Well, so do I. I certainly can't imagine how any one can have the heart to have a favourite horse or dog killed.'

'And if we *are* to kill, there are so many people it would be better to put out of the way than there are animals. I say, Cecil, if we were about it, wouldn't you like to have a shot at your uncle? *I should!*'

Cecil laughed heartily, and then told her friend of all that had passed, and of the terrible disgrace she was in.

'Poor Cecil! poor darling!' cooed Juliet, giving her cheek a little caressing rub with one finger. 'Oh! don't you long to be emancipated from such tyranny? Sixteen! And you are really only sixteen? What a pity! if you could only be older! Do you think he will keep you in the schoolroom till you are eighteen? He is quite capable of any amount of cruelty, so I daresay he will.'

'Adela Lester is going to your ball, and she is only seventeen; and he thinks an immensity of the Lesters, and how well they are brought up.'

'Still, I am afraid he is so jolly conceited, that however well he thought of others, and their plans and their ways, he will have his own crotchets and whims, and compare them and himself to all the rest of the world with calm self-approbation.'

'Indeed, I am afraid he would,' replied Cecil, sorrowfully. 'Do you know, last night, Juliet, I almost made up my mind I would run away.'

'Bravo! that is a capital notion! But, my poor Cecil, where would you run? Alas! alas! my colonel would not take you in.'

'No, I am sure he would not, and it would be much too near also. I never thought of *that*. But, Juliet, do you not know that I have—a *brother*—in Australia?'

'Brother! Yes, I have heard of him. I often wonder what sort of an animal a brother would be. It would be rather nice to have one, I think. Yes, I wish I had a great big brother—bigger than any body else's brother—and his name should be Almanzor; it should indeed. I'm not joking. I adore the name Almanzor. His name should be Almanzor, and he should marry *you*.'

'Oh, thank you,' replied Cecil, laughing; 'but I don't want to marry any one; I never intend to marry; and, please, Juliet, don't talk about brothers in that way. You don't know. I'm afraid you never can know. I am afraid I never can make you understand what my brother is to me; but I should *like* to tell you about him.'

'Would you? Then pray do.'

‘Yes, if you will be serious and very tender with me.’

‘Indeed I will. I know what it is to talk of the one we love *very* much. I like a little rave about my colonel now and then. Tell me anything you can about this brother of yours, Cecil; and, first, what is his name?’

‘Jocelyn,’ replied Cecil, softly. Often and often she had longed to talk to Juliet about this beloved brother, but had always shrunk from doing so with the timidity that generally accompanies a romantic love; and Cecil’s love for Jocelyn was the romance of her life.

‘Jocelyn! Oh, then it’s not Almanzor. I wish it had been Almanzor. However, Jocelyn is not half a bad name; he’ll do if his name’s Jocelyn. Now go on, and tell me everything.’

Cecil Vaux could not tell even this beloved friend everything where her brother was concerned. There were many tender dreams, and shy happy feelings, that could never be put into words for mortal lips to speak or mortal ears to hear; there was much that was too sacred to tell, and that would have lost its charm to herself if told to any other creature; but still the little history that she poured forth was in its very freshness, and in the intensity of the love that made it a history at all, exceedingly attractive and interesting. Juliet was captivated by the idea of this Jocelyn, and his sister’s reverential love for him, and said so with bright eyes and eager smiles.

‘How I shall like him, and how he will like me!’ she cried.

‘Yes, I often think how he will like you,’ cried Cecil, delighted; ‘if he will ever come home—if only he will ever come home.’

‘I shall be jealous of him; he will draw you from me.’

‘Oh, no! no fear of that. A deep love only makes your love for your other friends deeper. Of course we shall be more to each other than any one else can be to us. I am his only sister. No one can ever be to him what I shall; he *will* love me! And I mean to be everything that he can approve and admire as well as love. I often don’t do things, or do things because I feel it is what he would like. But when I have him, and am to him all that I know I shall be, it will only make me love you better, dear Juliet.’

‘Yes, I quite understand that,’ said Mrs. Wyndham, thoughtfully; ‘but I did not know sisters ever felt so for brothers; it is almost a pity, because they can’t *remain* first to them.’

‘But I shall always be first to Jocelyn,’ replied Cecil quickly; ‘he has no other sister.’

‘But he will have a wife some day.’

‘Oh no, I am sure he won’t. I never mean to marry, and why should he? Oh no; we shall always live together, and neither of us will require any one else. If he did not marry all these years when he has been really alone, why shall he when he has me?’

‘Only men do fall in love you know, and not always at convenient times and seasons.’

‘Well, and if he did,’ replied Cecil more slowly, and thinking over her words as she spoke them, ‘I don’t see that it need diminish our happiness in, or our love for, each other. In the first place, I am sure it would not be for a long, long time. We shall have grown into each other first; and then only think how I shall love his wife. I shall gain a sister—not lose a brother; he *could* only marry somebody whom I shall think the most charming person in the world, and whom I shall delight in.’

‘Yes, that would be very nice. What a pity my colonel is in the way, isn’t it? or he might marry me.’

‘Of course, I shall not feel to his wife just as I do to *you*,’ replied Cecil, quite gravely; ‘that would be impossible; and, in fact, I am sure he won’t marry for a long, long time, and probably not at all. I never do think of his marrying, and I hardly seem to understand it. But Juliet, I am glad that I have told you all about him. You can’t think how much I have wished to do so.’

‘I wonder you never did before.’

‘Somehow I couldn’t,’ replied Cecil, shyly. ‘I do hardly ever talk of him—not even to Helen—and never to anybody else.’

‘And when do you think he is likely to come home?’

‘Ah, I have not an idea. It is quite one of the dreams of the future; but sometimes I fancy he may come at any time, just as a surprise. What a happy moment that will be! It is difficult to realise the happiness of that moment.’

‘Why, here we are actually in Byfield,’ cried Mrs. Wyndham; ‘and we have walked as slowly as possible after all! We quite forgot that we were walking for a wager, and to see who could be in the market-place first. I wonder what Mademoiselle and Captain Feversham have been doing all this time; whether they have been perambulating round and round the market-place, making themselves a spectacle to the Byfieldians; or perhaps they walked as slowly as we did, and have not arrived yet.’

‘That could hardly be. They have no such interesting subjects of conversation as we have.’

‘Don’t make too sure of that. They generally seem pretty well entertained when they are together.’

‘Do you think so? Mademoiselle likes a change, I suppose, and would chatter on, in her foreign foolish way, to anybody; but she has really a great deal more quickness and brightness in her, if not more sense, than he has, and I suspect would very soon get tired of him as a companion. *He* has not two ideas in his head, and those are silly ones.’

‘Well, if he has not got them in his head, their silliness won’t affect him.’

Mademoiselle De Lys and Captain Feversham, however, appeared to have found their conversation as interesting as Juliet and Cecil had theirs, for by a curious coincidence they reached the market-place almost at the same moment as the others.

‘Well, this is nice,’ said Mademoiselle ; “we feared you others would be late. We walked so fastish.’

‘And we, you see, walked so fastish also,’ answered Mrs. Wyndham, ‘so that nothing has been proved by our experiment ; what a pity !’

‘The fact is,’ said Captain Feversham, ‘we walked rather slow. Mademoiselle’s boots are tight, and it made us rather dilatory.’

And then he laughed in the way that Cecil considered perfectly idiotic ; and looking hard at Cecil till he caught her eye, did something with his own that to her extreme indignation she believed he intended for a wink.

She coloured crimson, and addressing Mademoiselle in a very haughty manner, asked if she did not think it was time to go home.

‘I has the paper of music to make the little buy of first,’ said her governess. ‘Patience, Cecil, patience. Let me make my little buy first, and then go—go.’

They turned into High-street, and entered a stationer’s shop, where Mademoiselle made her little buy, while Mrs. Wyndham and Cecil looked over tempting volumes and Captain Feversham sucked the head of his cane. Then came the moment when separation was inevitable. Mrs. Wyndham mounted her pony carriage, and Captain Feversham lifted his hat.

‘When shall we four meet again ?’ he asked jantily, and laughed aloud at what he seemed to consider his own wit.

‘To-morrow I am engaged the whole day,’ said Mrs. Wyndham. ‘No, no, to-morrow is Sunday. I suppose meetings will be impossible on Sunday. What with church, and the walk you have told me Mr. Vaux always takes with his family afterwards (O the dear dull Sundays, how you will recollect them, Cecil, years hence !) a meeting will be impossible ; and Monday I am engaged the whole day. First the dressmakers, and then people to luncheon, who will stay, I know, till it is too late to go out ; but on Tuesday, do let us, if possible, meet in the same way at the same place.’

‘Delightful !’ cried Cecil. ‘I am sure we shall be able to manage it ; and then I hope Helen will come also. Her cold ought to be gone by that time.’

Captain Feversham made a long face. ‘That will be five of us, then,’ he said.

Mrs. Wyndham could not help laughing, but she only said, ‘On Tuesday the ball will be drawing very near. It will be on the following Friday, so we shall be thinking and talking about it in quite a new spirit. It is always such a different thing when pleasures we have been looking forward to for a long time, shining on us quite in the distance, descend from their far-away heights, and prepare to make themselves into the actual existent present time. They seem so new, and yet they are the dear old friends themselves that have occupied us so long.’

‘Yes, but that is just it,’ replied Cecil, always eagerly responsive to any idea of her Juliet’s. ‘It is the difference between writing to absent

friends when they are far off ; writing to and thinking of them you know ; the difference between that, and the preparing to welcome their very presence.'

'Yes,' laughed Mrs. Wyndham, 'my ball was in India, I suppose, at first, that is, when I sent out the invitations. I had only the feeling about it we have about our Indian relations. But it has been travelling home overland as quickly as possible ever since, and now we know it will arrive at Southampton, and be with us really and truly on Friday next. Is not that a consideration to support us through the dulness of even Sunday, and even Sunday at Fernley—hey, Cecil?'

Cecil laughed gaily, but Captain Feversham stared, sucked the head of his cane, and then said, with an air of deep and puzzled inquiry, 'Your ball is arriving at Southampton?'

'Ah,' cried the quicker Frenchwoman, catching the meaning though given in a foreign language. 'I see—I know ; it is only tapes ; vat you calls a tape, typish, vats do I means ? meteorological ? metrephorical ? The friends who were arriving at Southampton, is but symbolt of the balls that ish to be, quick, presto, in von minutes.'

'Bravo, Mademoiselle ! you have hit the right nail on the head,' cried Mrs. Wyndham. 'Verily, Cecil, I don't pity you, for your schoolroom hours with such an instructress must be rather jolly.'

Mademoiselle smiled, and bowed in approving gratitude.

'But we ish steady, we ish steady in the room of lessons,' she said. 'We work and we play ; and if ven we play we plays, ven we work we works, madame—in earnest we does.'

Here the four friends were obliged to part. But not exactly that either, for to Cecil's disgust she found she could not have the pleasure without the penalty, and the penalty remained after the pleasure had departed ; for Captain Feversham's hat raising was all for Mrs. Wyndham ; and when her charming pony carriage had rattled merrily off, he turned quite coolly, and with a business-like air, as if it was a matter of course that he should accompany Mademoiselle De Lys and Miss Vaux on their walk home.

'Are you not afraid we may meet my uncle, Mademoiselle?' asked Cecil, rather abruptly.

'Not von bits, mine dear—not von bits,' was the answer, gaily and smilingly spoken. 'The oncles this day has a leetle cold in his noses, and will not venture from his fires sides.'

But Cecil quickened her pace, and walked with a rapidity which she was perfectly well aware the Frenchwoman could not emulate. The result, however, was, not that Captain Feversham took his leave, but that the two fell behind talking earnestly together, and allowed her to proceed alone.

A WINTER STORY.

XV.

'Blows the thaw wind pleasantly,
Drips the soaking rain,
By fits looks down the waking sun ;
Young grass springs on the plain ;
Young leaves clothe early hedgerow trees ;
Seeds, and roots, and stones of fruits,
Swollen with sap, put forth their shoots ;
Curl-headed ferns sprout in the lane ;
Birds sing and pair again.'

Christina Rossetti.

JESS's illness, whether owing to her privations having been really more severe than any of them had conceived, or to some other cause, was not so simple and hopeful an affair as Mr. Mayne had at first predicted. The weakness was so great that at one time it seemed likely that she would sink from sheer exhaustion ; and even when a little hope sprang up again, it was so often shaken, and possessed such a tremulous hold, that it scarcely seemed like hope, and might rather have been taken for its opposite. But always, even at the times when life hung upon its feeblest thread, the childish eyes—more childish now than ever they had looked before—turned wistfully to watch for Philip Oldfield. Always a word of his would bring forth some mute action, pathetic in its feebleness, to show that she understood its meaning. And the spirit of protection for this poor little waif seemed all unconsciously to awaken in him a hundred things that had been as dead. It is impossible for us to say what may be as sunshine to the heart—except, indeed, that if all love is sunshine, it is the most unselfish that will send out the purest and most life-giving shafts. Whether or no a cloud might again enshroud it with its dark mists, there was certainly a brightness of sunlight making itself felt upon Philip's spirits at this time, even in the still sadness with which they watched poor little Jess. Instead of brooding, after his old fashion, for hours together with what was little more than a pretence at reading, he would ride to meet the doctor, to fetch the medicine, or patiently sit beside the little bed, and watch while Rachel went about her work. And although Ronald's lessons were often interrupted, he became conscious of, or else unconsciously benefited by, something ; an awakening, a stirring, a power which had never been there before.

Whether any of Mr. Oldfield's interest in the child were caused by some sort of vague satisfaction, some almost superstitious connection in his mind between this part of his life and that past which was so terrible, so that it seemed to him as if a life having been once lost through his agency, one had now been preserved—it is difficult to divine. It is at least very possible. His was a nature which would always minutely occupy itself with its own share in the workings of events which touched

it. Certainly it seemed as if a burden of some sort had been lifted off his heart.

However this be, there was a change in Mr. Oldfield's habits so far as his home life was concerned. With his neighbours there was little perceptible difference. Except perhaps with the doctor, he made no steps towards sociability. He would not always see Mr. Claughton when he came to the farm to know whether Jess stood in need of anything which the Parsonage could supply. At the same time, on the occasions of their meeting, Mr. Oldfield showed less of the nervous reserve which had hitherto affected them both with its discomfort. He was more frank, more easy, more genial. But he still shrank from the proffered intercourse, and received Agnes's messages with nothing warmer than courtesy absolutely demanded.

The old grandmother was dead : Mr. Claughton brought the news. Ned had announced his intention of going off to sea, and Jess seemed absolutely thrown for a home upon the pity of those with whom she had found a refuge—if, indeed, she claimed any home except that last which is granted to the most homeless, and almost mocks them by the strangeness of its name. At one time they all thought it was the only one Jess would ever need.

But, little by little, as imperceptibly as the small red shoots began to spread into a thin cloud of green, the child's strength returned. She could sit up in bed, where Rachel, without a word, permitted the kitten to lie, and play with that weird and goblin-like specimen of life, if such a name as play can be given to the grave sport carried on between the two. Ronald would bring her in a picture-book from the Parsonage, or at another time a bough of tasselled catkins ; he had a sense of protectorship about Jess, and liked her for her own sake, while Rachel chiefly thought of the effect upon her master.

By and by it became a delight to the child to sit at the window. She, too, could see a little corner of the farm-yard ; the pigeons would fly down with soft flutter of wings ; Watch come sniffing round to see that all was right ; the cocks and hens sun themselves. It was a pleasant quiet little bit of the world into which Rachel now and then descended like a tempest, evidently believing that her special mission was to stir up all those with whom she came in contact. But to Jess, safely perched up above it all, with her small thin face pressed against the window pane, these sudden swoops of Rachel were full of fun and amusement ; and to see the great turkey-cock driven off while he made vain and ignominious attempts to preserve his dignity, was an entertainment which sufficed for the whole day. In the garden, moreover, a cheerful life seemed to awaken even in the old gooseberry bushes and espaliers which had lain so brown and death-like during the winter days. A soft promise of green was visible in the cherry-tree ; birds hopped in and out, or followed an occasional track of fresh earth, where Long Peter had been putting in his crops, or sang exultantly from the branches of the taller fruit-trees.

The fresh and inexhaustible gladness of spring was astir upon the earth. The clouds were light and softly coloured; the hills carried the eye along a tenderer line of blue; out of delicious silences there came glad under-sounds of chirps and caws, and the faint bleating of lambs; now and then a whiteness of rain flashed down and brightened all the colours. If in the sombre and steadfast beauty of winter, and the stern solemnity of the black firs, the lesson of patient hope might have been read; here in the swift lights, the ever-intensifying hues, the carolling of the birds, hope was triumphant, masterful, filled with rejoicing. The child's heart cried out to it, as all young hearts answer at once to its enchanting touch. She might have forgotten—for all she ever spoke of them—the harshness, terror, and misery of her past life. They had slipped away, and she and Kit were in another world—a fresh, clean, lavender-scented world, through the windows of which stole in all manner of sweet and sunny influences.

But to her the kindest influence of all was Mr. Oldfield. She had a funny little nature of her own, as variable as any April day; and though she tolerated Rachel, and was not insensible to gratitude, she never really loved her. She would watch her with restless inquiring eyes, into which no such softness came as when she only heard Mr. Oldfield's step in the passage. It is probable that such childish devotion might have bewildered him and made him uneasy, had there not been a time when it seemed possible that those eyes would never light up again with any gleam of recognition. From that hour it had grown naturally. He was her protector, and Kit's, and he not only accepted the love, but responded to it as if it had been a magician's wand.

Her strength returning, and the sharpness of her thin shoulders becoming somewhat less angular and suggestive, it was not very long before she was suffered to come down from her sunny little room, and to go into the open air. She was so feeble at first that more than once Mr. Oldfield carried her back to the house in his arms; but she soon grew stronger, and was able to go about with the freedom she evidently longed for.

Under these circumstances the kitten established itself in the household quite as effectually as its mistress, and indeed with a greater despotism; for under cover of the immunity her illness procured for it, it became a sort of domestic tyrant, spitting at Watch, arching its back, and setting up its scanty and bristly hair with so weird an ugliness, that the old dog retreated as before something uncanny. It was evident that Jess's estimate of her kitten's powers was not ill-founded. As it grew bolder, it displayed a kind of antique frolicsomeness that was positively startling, entertaining itself by hiding behind wood or at the bottom of carts, from which it would spring forth upon a peaceable family of cocks and hens, and reduce them to a state of cackling and terrified imbecility. Nay, the very turkey-cock himself, taken thus unawares, was not proof against the agitation of his nerves, and would beat a hasty retreat. Ben's

dislike of the kitten was so extreme, that it is probable he connected her with something supernatural. And, indeed, her length, her blackness, and the kind of wild familiarity she displayed, were difficult to reconcile with the ordinary kitten experience. She was an arrant thief, and a daring poacher, and her redeeming point appeared to be a tyrannical faithfulness exercised towards Jess, to stay with whom she would scratch and bite, to say nothing of her ready resource of spitting.

Altogether it was an odd little household, and yet the odd elements had come together so naturally, that none of those concerned thought much about the strangeness. Jack Dykes was tried and sentenced. If the Ponds people felt they owed Mr. Oldfield a grudge, they may have accepted his shelter of little Jess as a kind of atonement. At all events, though one or two of the men had been seen hanging about—it may be to assure themselves as to her treatment—they had made no attempt to molest him.

Perhaps much of the healthful influence apparently working upon Philip resulted from the open-air life he was induced to live. Perhaps, indeed, Mr. Mayne, in prescribing it for Jess, had Mr. Oldfield more in his thoughts than the child. Once or twice when Ronald had taken her out she had come back worn and fagged with the length of their ramblings, and Philip had been angry, and gone out himself with them the next day. Ronald always carried them off to the common, which had a peculiar fascination for the boy. The bold openness of its lines, the freedom with which they met the sky, the richness of its dun brown, brightened with the gold of the gorse, and made tender with the delicate green of the young bracken and seedling firs, the soft rain-clouds sweeping it into their misty folds, the larks giving a voice to the gladness of the spring—these, with children for their interpreters, could hardly fail to bring light and life into those closed chambers of Philip's heart in which he had hugged his solitude. There was other life, too, than that unconscious beauty which was breaking forth from its rest. Rabbits came out of their holes, and sunned themselves on the warm sand. Birds' nests were discovered in all manner of impossible places, and offered an unfailing interest to Jess, whose life in the woods had given her a wide acquaintance with night-jars, chiff-chaffs, hay-birds, nettle-creepers, and a hundred others upon whom she bestowed expressive local names. Mr. Oldfield was dragged here and there; he was obliged to search the heather on hands and knees, to watch by the reeds of the pond for the moment when the moor-hen should leave her nest. He would come home wet, tired—for his physical powers were scarcely equal to the strain—hungry. Instead of brooding through the evening, he would often fall asleep. It is true that at times a wave of remorse would sweep over him. He would declare to himself that he had no right so to forget that past which had so long held him in its toils. He would shut himself up the next day with a determination to go back to the dominion of those old sad thoughts. But there was no such solitude possible for him now.

Jess would invade it, or the kitten, or Ronald, frantic with the delight of a tame magpie, perhaps brought by Long Peter, and requiring an order of protection from Rachel, who would inveigh loudly against this addition to her labours, and end by becoming responsible for its meals. Indeed, Rachel, although she had that in her which would always represent the opposition, was not the worse woman for it. She had a kind faithful heart that never spared itself, and she was rejoicing now over the change in her master. How it had come about she did not know, and her orderly mind would have been better pleased if things had been set right in what she would have called a reasonable fashion. Mr. Claughton might have talked to Mr. Philip; he might have read books; a sermon might have been preached. There are numbers of us who do not know how many sermons are preached in other ways than words; if it were not so, alas for the poor sad wavering hearts for whom the Divine Patience waits! But as Rachel could not fail to see that something was working in the right direction, she accepted it wisely, and cared little for any added burden to herself.

Hester at the Parsonage, too, was glad in hearing indirectly through Ronald of the change. She would have liked to see with her own eyes what she had so long looked and prayed for, but yet she had grown, as people do grow who learn great lessons, to be happy in a happiness in which they have no share. No share, did I say? Is it not the best and sweetest share, after all? No one could look into Hester's clear eyes, and think she was not happy. Life was no longer very young for her. She had travelled along rough paths and shadowy valleys, often with a weary heart, which seemed not to have had much rest, and yet through the shadows the sun had shone, and her heart had never withered into bitterness. Once Agnes, rich in love of husband and children, said to her a little falteringly words that had been many times on her lips:

'It seems hard that your life should be so lonely;' and Hester answered at once—

'It would be hard if it were so. I don't think I could bear a lonely life. But it is not. Are you all going to shut me out of your hearts? And if you did, there are too many memories laid up for loneliness.'

Agnes shook her head. 'That is different,' she said.

'Quite different,' said Hester cheerfully, though there were quick springing tears in her eyes. 'Quite different. It is not one of the visions we women dream when life is young, and there is nothing we think too beautiful to come. But things change colour and shape when we least expect. Dear Agnes, do not be sorry for me,' and she knelt down by her sister's chair, and looked into her face.

The two women silently kissed each other. Hester was in earnest, but Agnes could not believe it, for her sister's health and strength, of which she was deprived, seemed as nothing in comparison with that other gift which Hester had not. She said sadly:

‘Now that poor Philip is being roused by other means, I am half sorry that we came here. It has only been an additional burden for you.’

‘No, no!’ cried Hester, starting up. ‘Agnes, I thought you would understand.’ She was so impetuous, so suddenly moved, that Mrs. Claughton could only look with a little sad wonder. The hearts nearest to one another are farther away than any of us fancy; and perhaps the knowledge came to Hester with its sharpest pang at the moment when she had been disclaiming her loneliness.

As for her life, it was common-place enough in its daily round—what else should it have been? As the years roll on we find we all live the same sort of things, though they are dressed in different shapes and colours. The wonderful events that are to come to us do not come—or rather, they are there, turned into prose, and worked into dull routine. A few years ago it would have seemed impossible to Hester that she should endure to live so near, and yet so utterly removed from Philip; and now there was a strange passive content in the position, which she could not have borne to part with.

And for the rest we learn that there are other things in life besides the one thing on which our hearts had fixed themselves; yes, and a dim sweet beauty may shine out from what in the far distance looked absolutely unlovely. Often colours do not show themselves until we are close upon them; the moss upon the bough, the jewellery of an insect’s wing, are bare and brown, until, perhaps, we have them in our hands, and see and know. After all, the little things affect us more than the great outlines which are visible to all—the little pains that mar our pleasure, the little pleasures that sweeten pain. Is not life made up of such as these?—not big throbs of joy, or tragedies that rend our hearts? Only have patience, you poor souls, who think your trouble is an earthquake, shaking the very foundations. For, lo! after the earthquake there may be the fire, and yet the still small voice speak peace at the last.

XVI.

‘Who suffered once the madness cloud towards his love to blind him,
But gently led the blind along where breath and bird could find him.’

Mrs. Barrett Browning.

As Jess grew stronger, Rachel became a good deal troubled over her ignorance.

‘I do wish the master ’ud send her down to the school,’ she said one day to Ben as she was handing him out some seeds. ‘It ain’t to be ’xpected as I can teach her, an’ what’s more her won’t learn. She’s as cunnin’ a little mite as over were. The master could learn her anythin’; but it ain’t fit work for he. Jess,’ cried Rachel, suddenly catching sight of the object of her anxiety, ‘come an’ say your catechiz.’

Jess obeyed reluctantly, so far as the first part of the injunction was

concerned, but her catechism proved an ignominious failure, more apparently to the discomfiture of her questioner than herself.

‘Yer a very heedless little maid,’ said Mrs. Cæsar reproachfully. ‘I sha’n’t take you to church no more, unless ye mind yer book better.’

‘I doesn’t want to go,’ answered Jess with a cheerful acceptance of her fate. ‘My kit doesn’t go, nor the master, and I shall bide wi’ they.’

This reply went to Rachel’s heart, and touched a spot which had been sore for a long while. Ben had gone away with his seeds for late sowing, and Rachel was standing in one of the big unused rooms, putting aside what were left with a mechanical hand, and sweeping down some that were scattered over the rough table. The window was closed, even the shutters were only partially opened to let in a streak of dim light, there was a sweet dry smell of seeds in the room. Jess, who did not come there often, was looking round her curiously, and she was a little sorry when Rachel told her to go, and locked the door with a sharp turn of the key.

‘I shall speak to Mr. Philip at once,’ said Mrs. Cæsar to herself, as she stood in the long passage. ‘When ye’ve got to drink somethin’ ye don’t like, it ain’t no manner o’ use to take a sip o’t. An’ the child sha’n’t be brought up a heathen if I can help it. To-morrer’s Sunday. I shall speak to Mr. Philip.’

She could not find him, and her heart failed her in the evening, but having made up her mind not to flinch, after supper was over she went up to him and said in a low voice—

‘The child don’t like goin’ to church wi’out you, Mr. Philip. Will you take her to-morrer? Ye see she ain’t big enough to understan’ about one bein’ different from another.’

Mr. Oldfield glanced up in some surprise.

‘Can’t she go with you?’ he said. ‘You take Ronald, I believe?’

‘She wants you, Mr. Philip,’ said Rachel, tremulously persisting in her effort. ‘Won’t ye go? It ’ud be like old days. I dunno what to say when the children astes questions.’

Her words gave him an unpleasant thrill, not so much for that allusion of hers which she let fall in her nervousness, as from the strangeness of the idea thus presented to him, that he was accountable for the effect of his own actions upon others. He had nursed the persuasion that by shutting himself out from the world he escaped any claim which the world could make upon him; that he, as it were, stood alone, and the indolent selfishness thus fostered was not long in bearing fruit. Jess, with her absolute helplessness, her determined affection, could not somehow be brought into reconciliation with these theories. Perhaps the sight of Hester had shaken them. And here was another shock. He had suffered his faith to drift from him in a vague purposeless way, neither scorning it, nor deliberately flinging it from him, but letting it go. He would not have had Ronald grow up without it. So long as he provided him and Jess with the usual routine, he thought his own actions matters of indif-

ference. A dim sense of reality and life started up at Rachel's words, simple as they were, but he did not answer her, and she went away half crying and fearing she might have made things worse. She little knew that she had awakened something, an impatience, a craving, a weariness of his solitude, and when Sunday morning came it was so fair and tender with the tints of spring, that his heart leaped towards it, and only a feeble shame kept him from doing as she had asked him to do.

Ronald was generally ready to start for church at the right time, having a bribe to punctuality in his desire to watch the ringers at their work in the tower, before the service. But Jess was bent upon the carrying out of Rachel's threat, having a far greater desire to remain with the home party, than to be forced to remain quiet in church. It required all the patience which must actually have lain under Mrs. Caesar's sharp words and quick movements, to dress her, and then she whimpered and hung back.

'I don't want to come. I'd sooner bide at home an' feed the chicks. The master ain't a coming.'

'You go an' ask un then,' said Rachel, inspired by a sudden hope, and giving her a little push. 'If ye can get un to come, maybe he'll let ye walk to church wi' he an' Master Ronnel, though ye don't deserve it.'

'A little child shall lead them.' Rachel's heart sang its grace as she went quietly out after the three figures that were going down the lane towards the quick happy clash of the bells. Somebody else, too, said a grace when she saw who came in and took his place nervously. Hester felt that her prayers were being answered, and though not as she had dreamed once, by her own instrumentality, the heroism of her love made her able to rejoice with glad unselfish rejoicing. Here was what she had asked for, and that was enough. As for him, the old words fell on his ears with a new sweet power. There was a strange sense of companionship. I do not think that he prayed much, but prayer no longer seemed an impossibility.

Mrs. Caesar had an impression that the whole congregation was curiously regarding Mr. Oldfield, but she need not have been uneasy, the country-people being too apathetic to expend much wonder upon the novelty of his appearance, and curiosity, with them, requiring a stronger stimulus. Two or three talked about it in long-drawn words as they came out into the churchyard, and that was all, and soon over. Finie broke from Hester's hand and ran up to Ronald.

'Is that the little girl?' she asked, pointing. 'She may come and see my dolls when it isn't Sunday, if you like.'

Hester came up and put out her hand gravely.

'We have heard and thought a great deal of little Jess,' she said, in her low voice.

'She has recovered quickly,' said Philip, looking at the child, and forgetting. 'I hardly know what I ought to do with her.'

'Might she not stay at the farm for the present?' said Hester, with a

little hesitation ; 'and if she wants teaching go to the school, or let Agnes set her on the road first?'

'Ah, Agnes was always kind,' he said, smiling mournfully, and though the words gave Hester a start of joy, there was something in them so pathetic and heavy with an old weight of sorrow, that the answer she might have spoken faltered on her lips. Their eyes met each other's, and he looked at her more steadily than he had ever yet done. As he looked an expression of relief spread itself over his face, lightening it with some strange youth-giving power. 'Do you know, Hester,' he said quickly, 'that for the first time your face stands out before me, clear and undimmed by the shadow of that other which has always been between us, even in my dreams. Can you say the same?'

'I have never seen the shadow, Philip,' said Hester with her voice trembling. Mr. Oldfield shook his head.

'It has been there,' he said musingly ; 'and it has made me dread the sight of you and Agnes—if I could only hope that it were gone! But, no ; this is some happy moment given to me in mercy, but which cannot last, and when next I see you it will wear an added sadness for the instants in which I have been spared. God bless you for it, Hester, at any rate.'

He walked quickly away before she had time to answer. Jess, who had stood a little apart with Ronald and Finie, and had been watching with her sharp eyes, ran after him. Hester, still standing for a moment and looking, heard the childish voice break into merry laughter, and saw him, at last, look down, and smile in return. Her heart was heavy with thankfulness, but that is a burden which it is not hard to carry.

In the late afternoon, Mr. Mayne, who had given up attending in his professional capacity at the farm, rode over, as he still occasionally would do, for half-an-hour's chat with its master. Finding the kitchen and the opposite room empty, and hearing voices and loud clucking in the garden, he followed the sounds, and standing for a moment in the doorway, saw Ronald moving the coop that imprisoned the old hen to another spot on the daisied grass, while Jess, with the kitten clasped tightly in her arms, was driving the chickens with a little more energy than was needful ; and Mr. Oldfield, his hands behind his back, stood superintending the operations with an amused smile. Looking up and perceiving the doctor, he signed to him to remain at a little distance.

'The crisis will soon be over,' he said ; 'and it would be cruel to harrow her feelings by the sight of another enemy.'

The doctor nodded and kept back until the coop was safely placed, and the chickens gathered round it in answer to the anxious cries of the mother.

'You take a good deal of interest in your live stock,' he said, joining Mr. Oldfield on the grass.

'It is owing to the children, then,' said Philip ; 'and it is a little strange, for I do not remember ever noticing them much before. But is it

not astonishing to how small a world one may bring down one's interests, and how faithfully are reflected in it the incidents belonging to our own ? That kitten, for instance, at times positively startles me, she is so human with her love, her jealousy, and her cunning.'

'Come,' said Mr. Mayne, good-humouredly ; 'if you will only look at that side of the matter which is full of problems, you will miss half the good of a new intercourse. Take the kitten as she is, a thing to play with. What a quaint old house this is ! It must have many past memories hanging about it.'

'That meet us wherever we turn,' added Philip thoughtfully. 'It surprises me to hear people speak of a dead past. To me the past is always living, always part of myself, always part of the world. If it is in any sense dead, its ghosts at least haunt one with an awful companionship. I can lose them no more than I can lose myself.'

'Do you mean, then,' said the doctor, 'that you never shake off the present consciousness of what has gone before in your life ?—that you leave no burdens behind you ? To me that seems a terrible idea.'

'It is terrible,' Philip asserted with a shaken voice. 'Terrible.'

He stopped as if he could not continue the subject. Mr. Mayne, looking at him, and seeing the dread that had started into his eyes, said quietly,

'Do you mind giving me an idea of the things which haunt you ? If they are like other phantoms they may vanish if only they are looked in the face.'

Philip made a gesture of dissent.

'I have done that too long,' he said.

'Then let another look. Bring them out of the darkness. Ghosts are known to dread light and air and questioning.'

'Of late I have sometimes thought the same,' said Mr. Oldfield in a low voice after a momentary pause. 'Certain things have been forced into prominence, and the pain it caused appears to have brought an after relief. A month or two ago it is doubtful whether I could have talked as I am talking now. Nevertheless, I could hardly repeat all the circumstances which have made my past what it is. It would do nothing but revive the freshness and sharpness of my suffering.'

Yet as he said these words in which there was a keen ring of pain, he looked almost wistfully into Mr. Mayne's face, as if with something of a longing to accept the suggestion offered him. The doctor, not appearing to be aware of the look, said in the same quiet tone,

'Tell me nothing more than you like. At the same time it may be fair to let you know what rumour—who takes each of us by turns for her prey—says of your story. It is reported, then, that on the eve of your marriage with some lady, you accidentally administered a wrong medicine to her brother which caused his death.'

'Heaven help me !' said Philip with a groan. 'Is it all known ?'

'So much is known—or whispered. Whether there is more which has

not yet come out, and which preys upon your thoughts, I, of course, am ignorant. I can hardly conceive that an accident which I grant you was mournful enough, could have the power of exciting a remorse such as should belong to nothing less than crime.'

'Do you not understand,' said Philip tremulously, 'that there are actions of ours which become involuntarily crimes? Were I, for instance, to guide a blind man to the brink of a precipice, and there leave him, would you not call that act criminal?'

'Not if I were myself unconscious of the precipice,' replied the doctor.

'But you need not have been unconscious.'

'Perhaps not. But if you lay such a terrible responsibility upon the world, I, for one,' said Mr. Mayne, half laughing, 'shall be afraid to move hand or foot. Do you suppose you are the only person who has given a wrong medicine? I wish I could think so.'

If, however, he hoped by a touch of lightness to soften the harsh lines in which Philip Oldfield drew his own conduct, he was disappointed. It rather seemed as if the cloud of gloom had deepened upon him since they began their conversation. The children had strolled towards the end of the garden where a red-start's nest required to be daily visited: the old hen had subsided into an occasional single and motherly cluck; as the sun sank, long shadows stretched across the grass, the fir-stems caught golden lights, a thrush was singing, the air was full of the rich nutty scent of gorse. The sadness which hangs over sunsets may have been operating upon Philip's sensitive nerves. He was silent for a few minutes. Then he said gravely,

'You forget, I think, the cruelty of the circumstances which added tenfold to the acuteness of my trouble. But granting that others have suffered or deserved to suffer equally with myself, the thought gives me no consolation. On the contrary, when I look into the face of another man, I am oppressed with wonder as to what dark secret is hid behind the mask. I tremble now as I look into yours. The whole world seems to have had life taken out of it with that life which I extinguished.'

He spoke with so hopeless a dejection, that even Mayne, who was more interested in the experience than the man, was deeply and unusually touched. Unreasonable as it might be, it was also only the more pathetic as the difficulty of offering comfort became the greater. He murmured a few disjointed words about travel.

'I have travelled,' said Mr. Oldfield; 'but of what use is it to change scenes which affect the eye, while the mind's eye preserves always the same sad and unchanging picture? I tell you, Mayne, I believe it to have been burnt into my very brain. I have lost all hope of its vanishing. For if—as it has been now and then of late, as it was this very morning—the weight is lifted for an hour, it comes back as surely as night follows day, death, life, and vengeance the taking away of life.'

Arguments would have leapt to Mr. Mayne's lips at a time when his feelings had not been touched, or perhaps if they had been less rarely moved;

but something in Philip's manner communicated such a burden of hopelessness to the listener, that in place of good counsel he could only be aware of a strange sympathy leading him rather to experience Mr. Oldfield's own emotions, than to support him by proof of their weakness. For almost the first time in his life the practical man of the world confessed himself helpless. His tongue was tied at the very moment when one might have expected it to be eloquent in demolishing the foolish fancies of a morbid brain. The doctor's heart, to which he did not often appeal, told him that the clearest common sense, the most profound logic would alike fall powerless before them ; something else was wanted which was not in his grasp, and it gave him an instant of profound humiliation to feel Mr. Oldfield's eyes fixed upon his face with an eager and wistful gaze, and to have nothing to offer in answer but what he knew must be vain and empty words.

At this moment Jess, still clasping the kitten in her arms, rushed up to them with sparkling eyes.

'He says they're all hatched, every one of 'em. Please sir'—Rachel had given careful instructions as to that 'sir,' and Jess remembered them on special occasions like the present—'will ye come and show 'em to me ? They're right up i' the fork, where I can't niver get to.'

His sad gentle face still wearing the troubled look their unfinished conversation had called up, Mr. Oldfield took the child's hand in his and went at once, while the doctor followed, touched and softened by the consciousness of his own failure.

There was an old pear-tree in one corner of the garden, where it fell away a little in the direction of the river, and here between the great upspringing branches the birds had built. Probably Ronald's daily visits had accustomed them to the sight of strangers, for the mother bird showed no great disturbance, although she kept watch near. Jess was jumping with excitement.

'The master'll hold me up. But I ain't a goin' to take kit. Somebody must hold kit, an' not let her know nothin' about it.'

Ronald undertook this office, while Jess was lifted to peep. Then it became necessary for Mr. Oldfield himself to look, and Jess poured out experiences about the nests in the woods. It seemed as if the child had lavished all the treasure of affection upon her wild playfellows, rabbits and squirrels, and even a poor little hedgehog which the boys had brought in to torment, and which after a series of adventures she had succeeded in setting free. At last everything had evidently centred upon the kitten, which she regarded as not only the most beautiful but the most ingenious of its race. There was something infinitely touching in the childish voice that mixed up these little innocent histories of hers with revelations of hardships and harsh treatment such as seemed all unmeet for so young a life. The men looked at her pityingly, even when she broke into merry laughter.

— 'Are you glad you came to the farm, Jess?' said Mr. Oldfield gently.

'Yes, to be sure. They'd ha' stoned kit, or drowned her, else. I dunno what I should ha' done. Oh, look! there's the littlest o' the calves, the littlest o' them all, runnin' away from Watch! Watch, Watch!'

She dragged Mr. Oldfield after this new interest. Mr. Mayne, nodding good-bye, went up towards the old farm, lit with the golden sunlight, under which the tiles glowed and burned. He stood for a moment in the doorway, looking as he had looked on his arrival, and yet differently, for a new and reverent feeling was awakened in his heart. It is a good day in a man's life when he begins to feel that there are stronger things working in the world than his own wisdom or what it may lead to; and he said to himself humbly, 'The children and their creatures will do more for that poor fellow than I can.'

So the daisies closed their pink leaves as the long shadows fell upon them, young voices came up with a glad ring of delight, some far-away church bells now and then clashed into hearing, a soft greyness spread itself tenderly over the sky, broken here and there by rosy gleams.

It was like the Amen after a prayer: the folding of peace about the heart of the earth.

XVII.

Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

In Memoriam.

As Jess became more habituated to her life, she displayed a certain jealousy of Ronald's privileges. Especially was she jealous of the hours he spent with his uncle at lessons, during which time, she, being of too restless a temperament for admittance, was doomed to trot about after Rachel, doing such small work as her size permitted, and generally accomplishing a larger amount of mischief before the work was over. The other point which excited her envy was his going to the parsonage. She was intensely curious as to the circumstances of life there. Once seen, it is probable they would have had few attractions for her Arab nature, but as yet it was an unknown land in which she greatly longed to set her feet. Ronald, boy-like, would not trouble himself to give her particulars, and it excited her curiosity the more to find that no one else at the farm had been there.

Except with Mr. Oldfield and Ronald she never went far, having a dread of meeting with some of the boys from the ponds, to whom she still ascribed designs against the kitten's life—but she was usually the companion of their walks on the common. One day, however, Rachel preferred several complaints against her, and for the first time Mr. Oldfield inflicted the punishment of leaving her at home while he went out with Ronald.

She broke into such a storm of tears, breathless with passionate sobs,

that it required all Mr. Oldfield's resolution to abstain from immediate condonation of the offence, and from suffering her to accompany them. He shortened their walk a little for her sake, expecting to see her waiting for them at the bend of the lane, with the kitten swinging itself in its weird and defiant fashion among the nut-bushes at the top of the hedge.

Instead of meeting them as they had anticipated, she was nowhere to be found.

To Mr. Oldfield the child's disappearance brought a sharp and sudden pang. He had never been free from a fear that the Ponds people might repent leaving her and him at peace. Revenge upon him might incite them to mischief, and bring suffering upon little Jess. Or it was yet more possible that her passionate and undisciplined nature had resented its first punishment, and that she had deliberately run away. At any rate she was missing, and although of course there was the third possibility that having wandered about the house and fields, she might return of her own accord, it would have been likely, under these circumstances, that either Rachel or the men about the farm would have seen the strange little pair, or that they would have come out of their hiding-places when Mr. Oldfield returned. Such was not, however, the case. No one had seen them, unless, indeed, the magpie endeavoured to give information by holding his head on one side, and hopping eagerly towards the stable. Rachel had believed that Mr. Oldfield, having relented at the last, had taken Jess with him, and for her to have been unseen and unheard during two full hours, was so strange an event that it became evident something had occurred, whatever that something might be.

When search had been made in all imaginable places, matters began to look yet more serious. Ben only nodded his head to Ronald's suggestions, and went on with his turnip-cutting.

'It's what I looked for always,' he said at last. 'Her comes o' a bad lot, an' hers gone back to what her comed from. That's t' long an' short o't. It stans to nater.'

'What do ye know 'bout nater?' said his wife coming up impatiently. 'Ye ain't got none yerself that's worth a brass farthing, or ye'd not bide here like a stock when not a soul can tell whether the poor little maid's dead or alive.'

'Her'll turn up again,' replied Ben philosophically. 'Ye don't git rids of 'em so easy. Throw in a few o' them tummerts, Master Ronnel.'

It struck Mr. Oldfield that she might have followed them to the common. But Jess had that kind of instinct which grows from an unguarded life, and there was little fear of her losing her way, so that when he had been out two or three times himself, and had sent long Peter to follow the track they had taken, without either of them catching a glimpse of the little figure moving amongst the heather or hearing her shrill and peculiar cry, he despaired of finding her in that direction. Failing there he started for the village, but evidently she had not passed that way, or.

a dozen small witnesses would have borne their testimony, and he was returning with that faint hope we have all felt, that in our absence the lost may have been found, when the parsonage gates suggested that she might have been heard of there. Probably he would not have acted upon the idea had he given himself time to think, but he was in real distress about the child, and though a vague wonder at himself touched his thoughts as he walked up to the door and asked to see Mrs. Claughton, the impulse was strong enough to take him there, and the sight which met his eyes in the drawing-room seemed a direct answer to that impulse. For, on a rug by the window, sat Jess and the kitten, whom the children and Bramble regarded with awe from a little distance; Jess herself quite at her ease, and chattering away to Hester.

Perhaps the child's cry of delight, and the hurry with which she scrambled to her feet, helped both of them through that moment. Bramble retreated hastily before the kitten, Finie climbed on a chair and uttered little exclamations of terror. As for Jess, she was triumphant in her wrong-doing.

'The lady's giv' me a pictur' book, an' I can come when I likes,' she exclaimed.

'Do not be angry with any of us, although we all deserve it,' said Hester. 'Jess ought not to have come without leave, and we ought to have sent her back at once. And yet—I cannot be sorry for either the one or the other.'

He did not at once answer her, but drew a long breath, and stood looking at her until a soft flush crept over her face. It may have been that he had not before seen her in the house, and that it brought back a crowd of recollections; but that they were not of that mournful nature which exercised so depressing an effect upon him might have been gathered from the expression which deepened on his face as he looked. It was more tender, perhaps more sad, but without fear. A hundred thoughts which Hester believed herself to have for ever banished, rushed back upon her under its influence. It was friendship which all this time she had been trying to re-awaken, deeming that sweeter, softer name to have faded in the dim mist of years, and lo! was this its shadow, or a mocking remembrance? Philip turned away with a sigh.

'How did you learn to be wiser than I, Jess!' he said, putting out his hand to the child. 'And these are Agnes's children? Where is Agnes?'

'We keep her in her own room while the winds are so cold,' Hester answered. 'You shall see her when you next come.'

But Mr. Oldfield was looking restlessly about him. 'Everything is so familiar,' he said, 'that I do not know how to bear it. There is the brown china, and the little easel which held your paintings. And the likenesses—your mother—how bright her eye is, just as I remember it! Hester, these faces people my dreams. It seems here as if I had come into their real world, but it is well for me, is it not, that they cannot speak?'

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'If they could,' she said softly, 'their words would not be such as you need fear.'

He shook his head. The children were staring at them, and Finie, having another subject of interest presented to her, began to descend from her perch.

'If you like pictures, I can show you some,' she said, opening a case on the table. 'This is my mamma with her best frock on. And this is Aunt Hester. And this,' added Finie, a child's tender awe in her voice, 'this is my Uncle Arthur what is gone to Heaven.'

Hester, who had felt what was coming, dared not look into Philip's face. It seemed to her as if everything in the room were hushed into a terrible quietness. She would have liked to have cried out, to have done anything to break that endless hush during which her heart stopped beating, and which lasted perhaps a second. Then she looked. He had taken the miniature from the child, and was gazing at it hungrily, with tears running down his cheeks. Hester need not have feared, this was not the bitter unwholesome sorrow of past years. There was a world of forgiveness in the open face, in the child's innocent words, the same compassion that he saw in Hester's eyes, when he turned round as though to ask her what it meant. She came hurriedly to him, and put her hand on the picture.

'Do not look,' she said, 'do not look unless it tells you what he would tell you, his love, his faithfulness, his pity. Do not think of him any more with horror. If this had happened to another, and Arthur had lived, he, who was the truest friend, would have been the one to have helped and comforted you, and drawn you out of so terrible a remorse. Does not his face tell you this?'

'Your face tells me what he would have done,' said Philip, keeping his eyes on her.

'Because I speak for him. Oh, Philip, do not let your life be desolate because God made you the unconscious instrument of taking our dear Arthur to Himself. Do not mix with our thoughts of him the bitterness of despair. The past is past, and whatever it was, were there crime in it instead of the sadness of a great sorrow, it was never meant to eat out the heart of your life.'

'I do not know,' he said, passing his hand slowly across his eyes like a person trying to free himself from some mist. 'I believe in Arthur's forgiveness at last; life is so sad that one would scarcely blame the hand that banished us from it, but there is such an awful and intense burden in the remembrance of—what I did, that I scarcely dare hope that too may be lightened. But your words, Hester, fall very kindly.'

'They would be powerless if they were not true.'

'I had begun to doubt truth.'

'Ah, but you cannot,' she said, with a quick smile.

He went slowly towards the window, still holding the miniature in his hand. It seemed to Hester that the very fact of his bearing to look

at it was a hopeful sign, but her own nerves were so strung and wrought upon, that the instant she ceased to speak, she trembled. The days for which we have long waited sometimes pass by us before we are conscious that this is what we longed for, sometimes meet us changed and transfigured. And if pain has often happiness intertwined, happiness may be quite terrible in its pain. While Hester was still trembling, and yet answering Finie's questions with what seemed like her usual manner, Philip was at her side again.

'Hester,' he said in great agitation, 'I want you to think of what you have been saying to me. I know you to have a compassionate heart, and it may be that, touched by womanly pity, you have said more than your judgment would allow. Think of it all once more, go back, if you can bear to do so, over the circumstances; you can have no difficulty in so doing, for they must be burnt into your memory as they are into mine, with red-hot iron. Remember the anguish of that night, remember your father's—your mother's—words, do not spare anything. And then heap upon yourself, if you can, the burden of my past. Feel what every recollection inflicts upon me; think what the world has been, how desolate, how heavy, how cold with death! Think—why do I say this to mock myself! try as you may, pity me as you may, one moment of my experience is out of the reach of a happy soul like yours. And yet—when I am near you, Hester, it seems as if some warmth touched me, as if I did not stand so utterly alone. What is it? What does it mean?'

The tears were raining down her cheeks, her pitiful eyes never turned away from his, her voice broken and yet steadfast, answered him at once.

'Oh, Philip, it is you who have shut us out, not we you, and if you never knew how we have kept you in our hearts, how we shared your suffering while you fancied yourself forgotten, God did not keep the knowledge from you, you yourself held the door which barred us out. Do you think we have not pitied you? Ask Agnes what were my mother's dying words about poor Philip. Ask her what has been her daily prayer for years. Ah, if your thoughts were haunted by that death, ours have had to endure the anguish of dwelling upon your life as a living death to which you had condemned yourself.'

Her voice trembled at last, and gave way with a sharp sob of pain. The mist before her eyes had gathered so thickly that she felt rather than saw that he was close to her, touching her.

'If it is indeed as you say,' he said breathing quickly, 'what shall I do? what dare I do? Hester, my very life is in your hands.'

But I think for a moment even her great heart turned upon itself, that it was not his sorrow but her own which filled it as if the weight of these long years had suddenly gathered into one crushing remembrance. She was a woman, weak although so strong. Her tender patience was sometimes ready to fail. She, too, wanted help, warm love, the kindness she gave so freely. She, for an instant, yearned passionately for what seemed her woman's right. There are many strong souls who are always helping,

and yet thirst for help, while we are, perhaps, blaming them for their self-dependence, and at this moment it was Hester's heart which cried out with a yet more bitter cry than prompted Philip's words. But her habitual unselfishness was not long in returning, giving her, indeed, a sharply reproachful pang for having yielded to an impulse which appeared to herself both weak and blamable. She answered him in a tone of infinite tenderness.

'I have no doubt of how to reply to you, Philip. Tell me only whether there has not been a change in your life' since those children have lived at the farm?'

'I think so,' said Mr. Oldfield musingly. 'Looking back I can remember with a shudder how dark my life seemed in my own eyes. Yes, there has been a change.'

'Now you have answered your own question,' said Hester quickly. 'You do not want us to tell you that the change is good. We were never meant to use this world of God's as a place in which either to brood over our own troubles, or to dream over our own happiness. It is too large to be filled by one central figure. How many can you make happy? How many can you relieve from their pain? And you are still young enough to do all this good work.'

'Am I young, Hester?' said Mr. Oldfield, with a touch of sad wonder. 'I had forgotten it, then. But all that you say is good and true like yourself. I own its truth and its goodness altogether. Nevertheless, I know myself too well to listen with much hope. Jess was a little stray, wafted into my very doors under circumstances which seemed to force me to do as I did. But I have lived like a bat so long that the effort of flinging open these doors to the fret and clamour—the sunshine if you will—of the world seems to me stupendous and beyond my power. I want help. I could never accomplish it in the face of my own dread.'

'You would have our friendship,' said Hester, trembling.

'But how many lonely hours would be left! The ghosts that haunt me would become too strong; the re-action would be only the more terrible. Hester, is there no other way? Must I be always alone?'

He was fronting her; his hands were outstretched, his eyes fixed upon her downcast face with that eager intensity of yearning which grows out of much love and much pain. She answered him with a sudden gesture, going close to him and laying her head against his shoulder,

'Not alone, Philip, not alone!'

So these two lives came together again, as lives do not very often meet that have been once divided. Something there must have been of sadness and shadow, some touch of the weight of years, some absence of the fresh joy of young hope. But yet there is a joy, perhaps more tender, more calm, more peaceful, than the fairer gladness which enthralled us once; at least more likely to shine through familiar days of gloom, and that with a sweeter and diviner light.

They were married before long, and for a short time after their marriage remained at the farm. Hester, however, longing for her husband to be drawn into the warmth of human fellowship, and to have a more cheerful home, persuaded him to move to a house about a mile distant from the Pollard farm, leaving Ben and Rachel in charge of it, with Jess and the kitten as inmates, Jess being fairly reconciled to the change by her affection for all the animals on the farm, and a promise of many visits to the new home. Ronald went off to school.

'I dunno whativer I shall do without un,' Rachel said, standing at the yard gate, and looking up the lane. 'Boys is twice as handy as girls, till they git up in years. An' then I dunno but the girls is the worse still. I'm sure poor master might say so.'

Ben lifted his hat, and passed his hand over his forehead with his old action.

'The master?' he said. 'Why, ye niver mean——'

'Niver min' what I mean,' said his wife interrupting him, 'ye've been too many years a tryin' to make that out to be likely to jump to it now. I don't say as it mayn't be a good thing for him in th' end. But it ain't pleasant to think as our quiet years here is all ended, an' I'll niver believe as Miss Hester 'll know what pleases him so well as me. If that cat ain't a drivin' the life out o' poor old Watch! She's like a' the rest of 'em. Well, ye may be thankful, Ben, as ye've a quiet home, an' a quiet wife to do for you, an' some day when ye've lost 'em, ye'll know the good of 'em better.'

And so my winter story draws to its close. There is a beginning in winter as well as an end, for all the promise of spring, the glory of summer, the crown of autumn, lie hid in bare boughs, and under the cold pall of snow. Only let us be patient—with ourselves as well as with others—the frosts shall not endure, God's sunshine is not long hidden.

(Concluded.)

WOMANKIND.

CHAPTER XXII.

COURTSHIP.

It is a curious thing to observe how late in development was the higher love of woman for man previous to marriage. Only after centuries of generations nurtured in Christianity did she become fit to choose for herself, and thus there is less absolute direction in Holy Scripture on this matter than on almost any other. The daughter was so entirely the parent's chattel that she had no will in the matter, and was disposed of, while a mere child, incapable of a real choice.

Rebekah, indeed, was allowed to decide, but about one unknown to her, and though Jacob might love, Leah and Rachel were alike passively

bestowed on him. If we accept the part of the Bride in the Canticles as literal, it is still the love of one already betrothed, not choosing for herself.

The counsel is to the father when the son of Sirach says: 'Marry thy daughter, and so shalt thou have performed a weighty matter, but give her to a man of understanding;' and when St. Paul speaks of the expediency or non-expediency of marriage, it is to the fathers that he speaks, not the virgins themselves. And if this were so in the Israelite world, far less is the high and pure type of love to be found in heathen literature or history. Greek and Roman girls were bestowed in marriage by their parents, and often made tender and noble wives, but they would never have thought of making a choice. Perhaps the nearest likeness to modern love is in the graceful story of Penelope, covering her face with her veil, and turning to Ulysses when her old father asked her weeping, whether she would leave him. There have always been good wives, and also men who loved maidens, but maidens had little opportunity of loving in return, and, if they did, it was reckoned as indecorous.

It is a great mistake to hang a tale of the Early Church upon a modern love story. The Christian maiden, if destined for a wife, was given away too early to have a real choice, and the feeling we now call enthusiasm or romance, generally aspired to a life of dedicated virginity, as something far nobler than marriage. Legend tells us of virgin martyrs wooed by heathen youths, but never of any inclination on the maiden's part to heathen or Christian man. But these very virgin martyrs did much to raise the ideal of woman, and together with the homage paid to the purity of the Blessed Mother, began to alter the position of the whole sex, and the northern nations bringing with them strong, brave, devoted women, never except in Spain, subjected them to eastern seclusion. Romance arose, but most of its glorification of love was, it is necessary to avow, not of that pure and refined love that leads to marriage. The damsel was still given away by her parents with no volition of her own, and even, when left early a widow, was scarcely ever at her own disposal, and found no safety but in marriage or a convent. The loves of the earliest genuine romance are of Lancelot and Guinevere, Tristram and Yseulte, Orlando and Angelica. The courts of love in Provence were to decide on the cases of fantastic adoration between knights and ladies; the latter always married, for no one had seen or heard of them previously. The true Provençal stories are divided between the absurd and the horrible. On the one hand there is the history of the troubadour who languished and died for love of a lady he had never seen; on the other, the tragedy of the husband who served up the heart of his wife's lover to her, upon which she vowed that food less noble should never pass her lips, and starved herself to death. Both are given as facts by Sismondi.

It seems as if a good woman could not help or prevent this troubadour devotion; and Blanche of Castille used that of Thibault of Champagne for political purposes, but the right-minded woman in general would ignore it completely, and would have been shocked at the notion of falling

in love as a maiden, or choosing her husband. She vowed love to him together with obedience at her wedding, and in a true and pure heart the love was providentially always brought, even though the man might be utterly unworthy of it. Novels made out of mediæval love-stories, like those of our own time, are mere anachronisms. *Ivanhoe* might love Rowena, but Rowena would have been given to him or to Athelstane long before his evasion. The wardship and marriage of the young heir as well as the heiress was the perquisite of the guardian, and was granted by the king to some favoured noble, who either sold the child's hand, or gave it to one of his own family.

Dante and Petrarch, by making glorious ideals of Beatrice and Laura, did much to purify the sentiment of 'minstrel love,' and it began to grow into a more innocent and refined feeling of distant adoration as it is seen in Surrey and Sidney, while neither thought of Geraldine, nor of Penelope Rich as possible wives, only as sources of poetical inspiration.

In the meantime, however, mutual liking had obtained some recognition as a ground of marriage. Two children of Edward III., successfully, and by dint of constancy, accomplished love-matches. Anne of Brittany, and Jeanne of Navarre, heiresses though they were, successfully resisted distasteful suitors; yet, on the other hand, the intense prosaicalness of common life is shown in the Paston letters, where the girls pray for husbands, with apparently perfect indifference as to who they may be, and the family history bears no traces of anything like a courtship from personal affection. What we call the days of romance, were the most devoid of it in marriage. Yet the *Morte d'Arthur* was a great advance upon the continental tales of the same kind. Its blighted and repentant Lancelot would never have perverted Francesca da Rimini; and in literature, in England at least, a tone of innocent romance began to set in, immensely aided by Shakespeare, who, considering the almost universal example of romance, deserves infinite honour for never enlisting sympathy on the side of any but pure and innocent love. *Romeo and Juliet* is, however, probably the earliest of novels which treats love from a modern point of view. Its date as an Italian novel is before the end of the 15th century, and the main incidents are said to be true, the Capelletti and Montagudi being real Veronese families, and the monument still remaining. The point in it is, that though disobedient, passionate, and culminating in suicide, still the love is free from the stains to be found in ordinary ballad and romantic literature, and Shakespeare, by endowing the story with all his own graces, no doubt did much to excite sympathy with lovers, and make parents dread the effects of crossing them tyrannically. In fact, in the Elizabethan age, the real and ideal were blending. People were no longer contented that their imagination and their sense of duty should lie in entirely separate worlds; they acknowledged the power of love, and sought to purify and make it innocent. Lucy Apsley's account of her own feelings for Colonel Hutchinson is a beautiful picture of maidenly love, but for the most part the power of choice was in

inverse ratio to the value of the lady's hand ; and as to its being a sin to marry without being in love, no one dreamt of such a thing. What would the judicious Hooker have said if it had been suggested to him that he did wrong in marrying Joan without such a puerile preliminary? No, marriage was a business transaction ; the code was, as it is in France at this moment ; that the parents knew much better than their children what was good for them, and though they were gradually becoming convinced that to oppose a violent aversion, or thwart a strong attachment, might have very mischievous results, yet the girl was thought to be best and safest who exercised the least volition in the matter. Up to the reigns of the House of Hanover, this seems to have been the universal way of thinking among the higher ranks, and among all who had anything to bestow with their daughters.

Perhaps Richardson did the most to overthrow the whole system by bringing a tyrant father into universal detestation in one novel, and in another giving what was at the time taken as a picture of noble and respectful mutual love ; and though we now laugh at the formality and stiffness of Sir Charles Grandison, and the sentimental confidences of Harriet, still theirs was a high-minded refined love for what was best and greatest in one another, and it no doubt did much to convince the world that this was the right way of bringing about a marriage.

Physical force on the parents' part to make a girl accept their favourite suitor had become impossible. Moral force and tacit persecution still were in their power then as now, but public opinion was going further and further away from all exertion of it, and before the end of the eighteenth century, the absence of the practice of *mariages de convenance* would have been reckoned as one of the honours of England, at least by her own children, for a French or Italian woman would deem the freedom at once perilous and improper.

It is said, with what truth we know not, that the proportion of happy marriages is about equal in either case, and the risk of a wrong choice is less in the experienced parents than in the girl herself. This, however, leaves out of sight that worldly considerations are stronger in the old than in the young. The reply again is that the maiden's freshness is spoilt if she have to take these same matters of worldly prudence into account, and that she is more simple and charming if her parents have judged for her. But in the main there can be no doubt that where she is allowed to grow to her full power of judgment, and left free to choose for herself, there is much less risk of the horrible chance that her husband may be a person not easy to love, and that she may see the man she could have been happy with too late. This as we all know, has always been the bane and scandal of France ; where flirtation *after* marriage has met with the same toleration as with us flirtation does *before*. There must of course be this essential difference that the maiden's flirtation may always be the beginning of a genuine attachment, while that of the matron cannot be wholesome, and scarcely can be innocent.

Flirtation even here is, however, not the right beginning. The spark of true love is so sacred a fire, that it should not be fanned by folly and rattle. There is no reason that playful mirth should not be excited around love and lovers, but there should be something deeper below.

There are many mistaken ways of treating the matter. In one the mother says, 'I wish my daughter never to think of love and nonsense,' and hushes her about it, so that when her natural curiosity about woman's destiny awakens, she is left to pick up her notions, either from novelletes, or from girls like herself. In dealing with village girls, this kind of mistake is made by the best intentioned people, who will not read them a story with any mention of lovers in it, either because it is thought an improper subject, or because they giggle and titter at the mention, and thus the chance is lost of raising and refining their notions on the matter.

Another and a worse error, is the continual discussion of possible symptoms, and the perpetual family joke of ascribing suitors to one another, and teasing about them. And worst of all, is the speaking of a wealthy match, as if it must needs be a good one for that reason, and a magnificent achievement of the family. In truth, what is due to the young maiden on whose choice rests the whole colour of her future life, is to bring her up to the knowledge that Providence will decide for her whether she shall be married or single, will fix, in fact, 'the state of life to which it shall please God to call her.' That call, in our present state of society, is given through mutual love and eligible circumstances, and this truly seems by far the most suitable way. But the whole knowledge of the responsibility of such choice and the duties it involves, ought not to be left to the agitated period of courtship, or as it sometimes actually is, to the wedding-day. Brides have been known to say, that they had no notion how solemn a service was that of Holy Matrimony till they actually were going through it, at the conclusion of all the whirl of preparation, fine clothes, and all the inevitable (?) adjuncts of a wedding.

Sensible observations on books and on real life, ought to be so contrived as to show young people the spirit of these lines of the Rev. Isaac Williams :—

' 'Twas God Himself to Adam brought
His own appointed bride,
And by Himself the gift that wrought
The gift was sanctified.

' And for his son, when Abraham sent
To seek the destined maid,
God's angel watch before him went,
And all their path arrayed.

' An angel at Tobias' side
By Tigris' banks is bound,
An unknown yet protecting guide
To Sara hath been found.

' I deem that these, and such as these,
Unknown to sight or sense,
Do speak in marriage destinies
Unwonted providence.

' A special guiding beyond all
Mysteriously attends
By Him who makes the secret call
And hallows all the ends.

' And, therefore, those I deem unwise,
Fond tales of earthly love,
Which seem to trifle with the ties
Hid in God's Hand above.

' Of patient fear we need far more,
And more of faith's repose,
Of looking more to God before,
Till He His will disclose.

' Far, better far, than passion's glow,
Or aught of worldly choice,
To listen His own will to know,
And listening hear His Voice.'

Love there *must* be. A marriage of obedience, without previous love, was no sin in the maiden of former times, nor is so in some countries now, but in the English girl it is a sin ; for to her 'to *love*, honour, and obey' means so much more than it did to her ancestress, that the words cannot be honestly uttered without a real present sense of love and honour.

Secondly, it is not right to represent love as a lawless, in fact, sensual passion, excited by mere chance, and entirely unconnected with esteem. It might be so in the untaught woman, with the more violent passions of southern climates. It is not so in the average woman of the north. She has discrimination and control of herself, and she can learn that there are some whom she ought not to love. Let me add, that those tales which treat of the marriage of first-cousins as simple and unobjectionable do no kindness. It is not easy to put before young girls why it should not be, but it seems to me misplaced delicacy, which forbids them being told that though there is no doubt a proportion of healthy families born of first-cousins, yet that long experience has gone to show that hereditary diseases are intensified in the children, and that idiotcy, insanity, and defective organization are so often the result, that it is most undesirable, if not wrong, to run the risk of producing such offspring. To marry in the full knowledge of these facts is not trusting God, but tempting God. Fathers and mothers know them, and forbid. Young people cannot understand why, point to the instances among their friends, and those with which novels unfortunately provide them, and try to wear out opposition. It is very destructive of peace, for the intercourse between cousins is so pleasant, that it almost naturally leads to something warmer, and however much each side may be certain of the disapproval of the parents, the examples they see before them make them still hope on, till either there is a broken heart, or an extorted sanction. They ought to be taught the

real grounds of objection, and that where Heaven has entailed such consequences, His Will is manifest, and that their parents are therefore inexorable. This would not be a remedy in all cases, but it would be a preventive in a great many.

Reasoning about love is very difficult, because it varies so much ; but I believe it is a rule that pure and noble love must have begun in esteem, at least on the woman's side. Men know so little in reality of women, and credit them with so much, that they are ready to fall in love with mere beauty, fancying that the fair face must be the index to every perfection. But women's affection is generally much more independent of mere externals. *If* she can honestly believe *him* to be the most perfect specimen of manly beauty in the universe, it is an additional pleasure to her, and she thinks better of handsome men on his account ; but it is not his physical beauty that has won her heart. Either it is his loving her, or else it is some high or supposed high quality on his part.

There is a love, very deep and true, that sometimes has been excited by one known in early youth, before he proved himself unworthy ; and there are hearts which, when thus given, can never be taken away again, but love on in sadness, distinguishing between the sinner and the sin. Such love is faithful and tender, and as long as it does not love the sin as well as the sinner it is ennobling ; but if it excuses or defends the error, it pulls down the woman from the standard to which at length she might yet raise him.

But love to one who is not worthy of it in the first instance, is beneath a woman of right mind, and happily not common. Mr. Trollope has represented his Emily Hotspur, as dying of love for the good-for-nothing cousin, whom she first met, with the perfect knowledge of his being a scamp, and with no subject in common but horses. It is an insult to womanhood to represent such things as possible, and I do not think they are. Good girls may be deceived, may have illusions, but they are not attracted by what is essentially base, mean, and dissipated.

The sweet moment of the discovery of loving, and being loved comes, and therewith the trials. Parents may not see as many perfections in the lover as the young lady herself, and may hesitate to entrust her to him ; or there may be considerations of prudence, which render them unwilling to give a free consent ; or there may be objections on the part of the gentleman's family. In all these cases, there is nothing for it but patience and obedience. Take the first case. The father has far better means of knowing the truth as to the man's character than the girl herself can have. What may seem to her horribly unjust and prejudiced, may be the sad truth, and to persist in an engagement in the teeth of such opposition, is flat disobedience. Nobody can deprive her of the power of loving and praying for him ; but if the opinion of him be ill-founded, he will prove it so in time ; and if his affection be worth having, he will return to her. If he were really unworthy, there will be reason for thankfulness that submission has saved her from unhappiness,

far worse than her youthful disappointment, though it may not so seem to her at the time. She may suppose that if she were permitted to see, or write, or be engaged to him, she could save him; but let her remember that however prejudiced her parents may be, or may seem to her, disobedience is evil, and she has no right to do evil that good may come. No good will come if she is overcome of evil. She must overcome evil with good.

So, also, when there is the question of discrepancy of faith. A Church-woman ought not to suffer herself to become attached to a man outside her own Church. If he be in earnest in his religion, he cannot but try to bring her over to him, if he be not, she ought not marry to him at all. In the heyday of youth and life religious differences seem of no great moment, when, as people say, their hearts are right, and their hopes the same; but when trouble or any stringency of life comes, then the difference of the foundations becomes pain and grief, and the most pious of the two will absorb the other.

And as to the more common trial, alas! of the present day, that of finding the man a sceptic, yet talking of being so unwillingly and still unblemished in character. Then St. Paul speaks plainly about the being yoked with unbelievers. The believing wife, who may sanctify her husband, is one already married before her own conversion; but no woman has a right to marry a man, who in the pride of intellect or out of mere imitation has thrown away the faith once delivered to the saints. He may say that he respects her faith, but his contempt for it as fit for women, acts on her. Much better that hearts should break than the sin be done, and mayhap her martyrdom of steadfastness is the surest way to his conviction.

The case is harder when the objection is on the ground of insufficient means. There is so much to be said about not looking forward, and the present misery is so great, that it is not easy to believe that those who inflict it do so from the desire to prevent greater distress in future; but, here again, obedience must be the principle, and those not under the glamour of actual love, cannot fail to see that to bind upon a man the weight of a family he can barely support and cannot educate, is often the destruction of his health, spirits, and efficiency. The girl may fancy that she will be his help and not his hindrance, but she cannot answer for her own health and strength. The place where his business lies may disagree with her, and all her best designs and youthful energy may fade into querulous slovenliness, under the depressing influence of constant ailments. She will see her husband haggard, worn, and altered, and feel incapable of cheering him.

This is what her father and mother see before her, and dread, while she is thinking them cruel and worldly, and wishing she could reduce them to reason by a little bad health; nay, sometimes contriving actually to do so, by pining and fretting herself ill.

But am I defending worldliness, or wishing no one to marry into

poverty? By no means; but I do not think that such marriages ought to be made very early, and without full trial of the affection that prompts them.

It is a strange thing to say, but experience proves it, that nothing is so uncertain as constancy. *Primâ facie* we should say, that to 'love one and love no more,' and never to swerve from the first serious attachment of a life was the part of the finest and greatest characters; but real life does not show that it is always so. Some natures recover, and open to a new affection after being thwarted and separated from the first; others never cease to retain the first treasure of their hearts, and can be happy with no one else.

Now if the love be of this kind, it will bear waiting till industry shall enable a sufficient provision to be made to prevent actual living from hand to mouth on the gains of the breadwinner, so that any breakdown on his part must lead to distress. If the man cannot, while single, exercise self-command enough to do this, he certainly is not fit to trust a wife to. Professional men ought to make such saving, and in these days of employment for women, it might be possible for the lady to work on her side for some years. And in the case of clergymen, it is an absolute duty to the Church not to burthen her revenues with the support of wives and children. A clergyman without a private fortune saddles his clerical income with what it was not intended for, when he marries; and if he be the incumbent of a poor living, or a curate, he brings his profession into contempt, and cripples his charities. A girl who likes to visit cottages, train the choir, and teach at school, is said to be cut out for a clergyman's wife; but if she marry on an income too small to provide servants to look after her household and children, she will have no time to assist her husband in his parish cares, and no alms to bestow; nay, she and her family are themselves consuming what the Church provides in order that her priest may be her almoner. 'A good living' ought not to be looked on simply as a good thing to marry on, but as a means of doing a great deal for our Lord in His Church. Private means alone give a right to a marriage with a clergyman; and if an affection springs up, and an engagement ensues, the lady, as the lay party, ought to work, save, or inherit enough for a provision before she marries. Though 'those who wait on the Altar should live by the Altar,' this does not mean wives and families also.

This sounds hard-hearted; but it must be remembered that the position of most clergymen in England makes them marry into a class which cannot well dispense with comforts and luxuries, and that stern severe poverty in a single man does not impede usefulness nor diminish respect; but that they do so in a married man. A shabby wife—poor little Mrs. ———, whom everybody pities and patronises—is no benefit to the Church.

But this is not saying that people had not much better marry when they have all human security of provision to fall back on in case of need.

It is very good for them to begin poor, and to dispense with display, and some merely conventional wants. If they have affection enough to do this and be happy in it, then they may well marry with brave heart and hope.

How much ought to be secure, I will not say, because everything is relative. 'I waited till I had two pigs in my sty, and then I knew I was a match for any woman,' said an old cottager, and the foresight and self-denial which enabled him to start with the two pigs are the real essentials, without which none can prosper.

Long engagements then, with patient steady diligence and hope at the end, do not seem to me to be deprecated, but rather to be good for both parties, who can lean on each other's characters while working and waiting for one another. Nor need the man do all the working and the woman all the waiting, according to the traditional fashion, in which she has nothing to do but to be resigned, and pine and be a faded old rag by the time he is ready for her. This is what parents fear when they say they do not approve of long engagements, but there is no reason why the daughter should pine. She will probably not earn money (though in some cases she might do so) but she can surely find some occupation which will prepare her for being of use as a wife; whether in domestic economy, or in cultivating some art or other pursuit likely to be congenial to her future husband. Moments of weariness and sickness of heart will certainly come, but in general a cheerful resolution, strong faithful trust, and sustained activity will bear the spirits through.

Trust there must be. Love without trust is no love at all, and there should be a stout resolution taken against frets, jealousies and exactingness. The old Latin Grammar proverb that the ire of lovers is the re-integration of love, is a dangerous one, for if true once, each successive re-integration will be slighter and slighter. In fact, most of the stock sayings about lovers are founded on the uncertain, wayward, petulant creature that the 'very woman' was before she was educated and self-restrained. The caresses, and squabbles, and reconciliations here meant are like those of a couple of children always quarrelling yet who cannot play apart, not those of beings in earnest. Fretful complaints of supposed neglect—nay of real neglect—are not the way to keep affection.

One proverb is indeed eminently and exceptionally true, namely, that on love's blindness. Some time or other, either before or after marriage, part at least of the dimness will be removed, and the parties will have to perceive that they must make the best of one another, instead of finding absolute and adoring perfection, ready to have only one will between them.

Now, a real engagement, though not ratified as betrothal, ought to be a sort of marriage of the spirits, the gaining to each of the 'angel friend to share in everlasting rest,' and therefore the entering on it should not be lightly made, far less should it be lightly abandoned. That it is not irrevocable is indeed well, since there may be cases where the comprehen-

sion of each other was imperfect, or where some unhappy change has come over one or other, and to persist would be the greater evil; but even then there is a broken pledge, and the one who is disloyal has much to answer for. Once engaged, a girl has need to take care that her spirits and love of notice do not betray her into looks and words, disloyal to her lover and unfair to other men. She may be secure in her own heartfelt allegiance to him, but to toy with it is not only unsafe but wrong.

Why do I say these things? Everybody knows them, everybody finds fault with those who do them, and yet when the trial comes, girls do them, and laugh off the censure, and throw away—I will not say their happiness—but the true glory of fidelity.

One more thought. When a man gives a woman his love in full earnest, thenceforth her personal qualities are so much positive or negative quantity added to his own. If the motto of both alike be

‘I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more,’

the woman will be even here in her own way her lover’s Beatrice, raising and lighting him with her own spiritual nature and purifying the current of earthly love with the Water of Life itself.

‘For surely they are most in love
Who love but only Thee.
Or if upon earth’s darksome breast
They find some spirit rare,
Which, bright and true beyond the rest,
Gives back Thine Image fair.
With thankful, not adoring gaze,
’Tis theirs to look and muse,
How glorious the meridian blaze
If such the twilight hues.’

Happy are hearts linked together ‘in Christ,’ with His honour and glory ruling over their love for one another. They are safe; whatever storms may blow over them, theirs is emphatically true love, refining and ennobling each.

The strong man will make all sacrifices to the right with a freer and more gladsome spirit, if she whom he loves goes along with him, and cheers him to the effort, yea, even if it be one which keeps them apart; but if she weeps over what he thinks his duty, tries to find reasons why he may do otherwise, thinks his sacrifice almost an unkindness to herself, she may perchance break his resolution and draw him down to her own level, or if he be too strong for this, she will send him forth on his way wounded and sore with resistance.

Since vanity and worldliness, or weary affectionate impatience for their union, may turn the scale in some decision on some situation of doubtful good, or lead to questionable means to secure promotion, in such matters nothing is so important as that her eyes should be clear, her heart true and faithful, as a course of endless evil may be begun, the wreck of a whole lifetime.

Yes, from the moment a man puts his heart into the hands of a woman she has the responsibility of his life. She should try her utmost to keep her thoughts in a different region from the conventionalities that surround lovers, and which are only innocent when they are the mere outward sport of happiness, not interfering with the deeper, loftier, more solemn thoughts.

The flutter of excitement and importance, the presents, the wardrobe, the dress, the bridesmaids, are so much brought forward in these days that there is often a risk of greater things being forgotten. It is true that marriage is a joyful rite, and an emblem of a great and joyful mystery, and a wedding is looked on as an occasion for gratifying all manner of friends and relations on either side, who would be hurt if there were not a great display.

For whose happiness are all the expense and turmoil it is hard to say. Certainly not for the bridegroom's, who only wishes he could go through it under chloroform, and has had besides to present out of means which sometimes can ill afford it, an unmeaning gardener's bouquet, and an expensive present to ten or twelve girls he neither knows nor cares about, and some of whom are only chosen to make up the pairs, and that their dress may serve as a milliner's advertisements in the country papers. Nor can it be much pleasure to the bride's mother to be contriving for a breakfast beyond the capacities of house or servants. While as to many of the guests, they have felt it a heavy tax to have to make a present, not out of love, but because it is expected of them, and not with a view to use or appropriateness, but to the figure it will cut in the trophy of presents erected on a side-table to be enumerated in the county paper by the reporter. And where the name is well known, family affection cannot make a simple gift without being stuck up, enumerated, and commented on perhaps through a whole series of newspapers. There is a general misery about speeches, and much fulsome folly talked. The bride's good-byes are interrupted by the necessity of exhibiting her to gossiping friends, and she drives away amid the old shoes, which, if they have any meaning at all, have a heathen meaning. Everybody wanders about disconsolately wishing to get away. They tell the mother it is a very pretty wedding, but they agree afterwards that nothing is so dull. Who is the happier? Perhaps the youngest guests, and certainly the little nursemaids and idle boys who crowd into church after the procession, so that the service is interspersed with infantine murmurs. And the readers of the country paper have a few idle moments amused by the technicalities of the report, which tells every dress like a fashion book (I have even seen 'washing silks' particularised), and enumerates all the tradesmen who furnished eatables, flowers, &c.

And for this the great proportion of English weddings are made affairs of flurry, worry, and display, so as to put to flight not only all the poetical graces, but too often all the higher and purer thoughts. The true Feast which sanctifies the wedding and brings Christ to bless the rejoicings is

often omitted from a sense of incongruity with such a mere spectacle, or from fear of offending somebody on one side or another ; and when it does take place, it is a stumblingblock to some, while this and the presence of the choir obtain for it in the newspapers that vulgar announcement, ' A Ritualistic Wedding.'

What is to be done then ? The Feast of Cana was a feast indeed, but have not we renounced the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and why should they be showered on these occasions so as almost to smother the service of God under that of mammon ? Why should not the announcement with which people so often begin, that it is to be a quiet wedding, be adhered to ? Why should scores of civility be paid off to indifferent people, and display be provided to amuse them ? Why should not the marriage take place in really early morning, with the Celebration at its fit time, and only attended by the bride's maidens, the nearest and dearest to both, and by those friends and relatives whose hearts are in the matter ?

Later in the day there might, according to the circumstances of the family, be full festival, including neighbours, and, above all, those special guests of our Lord's own Wedding Feast, the poor and the maimed, the halt and the blind.

Might not this, for the very reason that it *would* be a grievance to this world, be more like a Christian wedding and a safer beginning of the joint journey through life ?

PAPERS ON SISTERHOODS.

XVII.—THE THEORY OF THE RULE.

FROM what has been said in the preceding paper, it will be seen that the Rule of a Religious House is in truth an explanatory gloss on the Three Vows ; a means of making as plain as may be the method of carrying them out habitually and sincerely ; while the Constitutions are directed to the secure continuance of the Society which adopts this as its aim.

But the Three Vows are, as has been earlier pointed out, simply the Baptismal pledges taken in their entirety and strictness of construction, and thence it becomes evident that the true conventual spirit, which is a sanctified self-control and self-discipline, can never be attained through a system of direct coercion, which makes self-control not only superfluous, but impossible.

We do not try to cure insanity now-a-days with chains and strait-waistcoats. Such methods aim no higher than preventing the patient from doing actual mischief ; but they tend to aggravate the original disorder, of which mischief is the mere symptom. A skilful physician strives rather to train the lunatic into self-restraint, to quicken his sluggish

moral sense, to enlighten his darkened reasoning faculties, to recognize in him a curable human being, not a wild beast to be caged till death.

Self-control implies some power of choice, some freedom of action ; and a Rule which by its physical or moral pressure leaves no room for the operation of free-will becomes a perpetual strait-waistcoat, and has no moral utility whatever. There is nothing which more thoroughly exemplifies Rochefoucauld's maxim, "*C'est une ennuyeuse maladie que de conserver sa santé par un trop grand régime.*"

By *physical* pressure, I mean a Rule which by its rigid and searching provisions leaves no time nor opportunity for voluntary action on any occasion ; which maps out every moment, and prescribes every detail, with punctilious minuteness ; which, based on the axiom that the members of the Society are never to attempt walking, is designed as a go-cart to last for each one's life. Perpetual silence, for example, does not *cure* sins of the tongue. All it can do is to drive the eruption inwards—not a very wise proceeding in the opinion of physiologists. The achievement of training people to speak wisely and well is enormously higher as a moral victory ; but is so very much more difficult, that incapacity prefers to fall back on the coarser method.

By *moral* pressure I mean the teaching that any and every constructive infraction of the bare letter of the Rule is a sin, of greater or less gravity according to circumstances, but still always a sin. This is the Pharisaic temper so constantly denounced by Christ, and as it has received His sternest disapproval, nothing can be plainer than that a Christ-like life is altogether incompatible with it. And a Society whose life is not Christ-like had better cease to exist.

Nevertheless, it would be a grave mistake to suppose that a vague and indefinite code, lax in its obligations, and yet more lax in administration, is a model to be desired. If the Religious Life is to be a reality, it must needs involve some strictness, some giving-up, not called for from persons living in ordinary domesticity. The special regulation that marks the difference may be slight in its direct demands on compliance, and yet it is sure to prove incompatible with certain forms of self-indulgence, freely permitted to secular persons.

A clear illustration of this truth may be found in the working of the Daily Service of the Anglican Church. All clergymen of the Church of England without exception are bound by statute and by voluntary promise to recite the appointed office twice every day ; and those who have a parochial charge are bound to do so publicly in the parish church or chapel. Owing to the relaxation of discipline and to an enfeebled sense of the sacredness of obligations, no more than a very tiny minority of the clergy do observe this rule. And yet it looks at first as though forty minutes a day, which are all that even public recitation of the two offices of Matins and Evensong require now, make but a slender demand on leisure. Certainly a public official whose office-hours were no longer, or a parish doctor who could get his dispensing work finished in that

space, would be thought very lightly tasked indeed. But when it comes to be tested by practice, the result is that the clergyman finds that he is obliged to give up a good deal for his religion. His yearly vacation is curtailed, because it is more difficult, and more costly to provide a deputy for daily ministrations than for mere Sunday duty ; his social intercourse is often restricted, because the hour which would find him at a dinner-party or on his way to it, is pre-engaged for service in church. And as the notion of giving-up for religion's sake is not pleasant nor popular, a hundred plausible reasons are found for not having daily service ; but the real one, which is not acknowledged, is that it is incompatible with habitual personal indulgence ; whereas the belief in Christianity as the religion of the daily Cross, especially for its ministers, has been thrust into the background.

Exactly so, there will be in every well-drawn Rule provisions which, without unduly taxing the powers of members of a Society, are yet altogether incompatible with various comparatively innocent forms of self-indulgence formerly allowed them ; and which would consequently prove irksome to persons with whom religion is a mere weekly fringe on the edge of their lives, but not part of the main texture. And as the chief peril to high tone amongst these classes which are not exposed to the temptations and the surroundings of the poor, comes from over-softness and luxury, from the pursuit of amusement as the aim of life, instead of a mere alternative to work, and from habitual yielding to caprice ; so the life which is to be set before them as the contrast to this must be marked by three clear tokens, simplicity, order, and devotion. Very plain living, very settled habits, very frequent prayer, must therefore be essential principles of the Rule, if for no other reason than that these conditions are almost necessary to the regular and adequate fulfilment of the active tasks of a Sisterhood, which make large calls on the energies of body and mind. But this very fact settles the question as to the degree of pressure which the Rule is to exert. If the object of a Sisterhood be no more than to insure that its members shall lead a contemplative life severed from all contact with the outer world, there may be something said in defence of a system which prescribes every thought and action beforehand ; though even so it is sure to impede the spontaneity which is essential to true dedication of self and to high spiritual vitality. But an active Sisterhood may have at any moment to call on each of its members to think and act for others, to take the direction of a trust or a department, to put some person or thing right that has gone wrong. Therefore our primary aim must be to make each Sister an intelligent agent, and not a mere wheel of a machine. To this end it is necessary to inculcate a principle which, obvious and reasonable as it is in itself, seems almost impossible for great numbers of persons to understand or act on. It is that where earthly obedience is due at all, it is to *law* and not to *persons*, except so far as those persons are empowered by the law, which creates, defines and limits their office. Blind compliance with the

will of superiors is not rational observance of the Rule, for it may very possibly happen that the Superior's directions may contravene the spirit or the letter of the Rule, from which alone she derives her authority, and by which she is as much bound as any other member.

Of course there must be some governing head everywhere, and a Rule which did not provide that the directions of Superiors are to be complied with promptly, save under very exceptional circumstances, would be of little value. But it is a very different thing to lay down that Superiors are to be obeyed as forming the Executive for carrying out the Rule, and only so far as they do carry out the Rule; and to lay down that Superiors are to be obeyed always, because obedience, considered purely in itself, is a virtue, and because it is a mark of grace to submit one's own judgment unquestioningly to an order which may be indiscreet, hurtful, contrary to rule, and even immoral, provided such order be issued by a person in authority. The limitations under which the members should have the power to refuse compliance with an order will be stated later; but the only point of importance at present is to enforce the truth that the habit of mind engendered by absolute compliance with the will of another person is fatal to the exercise of independent judgment in any emergency, whereas the real test of excellence in an active Sisterhood is the number of members it can intrust with separate responsibility. The same reason holds good against making the Rule too minute, precise, and inquisitorial. It should be a guide and help to spiritual growth, and leave room for expansion, for otherwise it will destroy all individuality of character and faculty, and turn its subjects into mere machines, quite incapable of acting with tact and efficiency when thrown amidst a new set of conditions. The spiritual reason for making the Rule broad and elastic instead of narrow and detailed is of not less weight. There will always be in communities governed by a religious code a tendency to formalism, a liability to mistake accurate observance of prescribed maxims for true holiness, a mechanical discharge of routine for the conscious living of a life. This can be counteracted mainly by leaving room for the conscience and will to act outside of fixed injunctions, and by making these injunctions themselves so far general as to require some intelligent thought in order to carry them out. But if nothing be left to individual judgment, if every action be mapped out beforehand, if every contingency be anxiously provided for by anticipation, no faculty of the mind save memory will be exercised at all, and memory cannot deal with the future, nor, save in very subordinate fashion, give real help in the present.

One portion of the Rule, however, may very fitly be more precise and detailed than the others; namely, that which is concerned with the special work to which the Society is devoted. It is well that any such work should be planned and organized on a secure basis, and with a clearly marked theory of action, especially in order that the same method may be employed in all Houses of the Society in the event of its spread and

success ; because in that way only is it possible to interchange workers freely without risk of hitch or disorganization.

Hence, just because this is in a great degree a question of mechanism, a more precise enumeration of particulars may often be found expedient, though care must be taken, even under this restriction of subject-matter, not to overload the scheme with minute details which would tend to stifle liberty of action in dealing with exceptional cases of any kind.

In short, the spirit of the Rule, far more than the letter, should be studied by those who have to carry it out, and if the letter be so prolix and burdensome as to task both memory and conscience severely, there is little prospect of the spirit receiving its due share of attention, but every risk of a speedy declension in the tone of the Society, after the first ardour and vigour which have given it birth shall have had time to cool down.

It will therefore be found wise to embody in the Rule itself a provision that each member of the Society shall be trained, so far as possible, to the work of each department in turn, in order to acquire a competent knowledge of all. As a rule, the first half-dozen Sisters or so of a new foundation are more intelligent and efficient than the members who join at a much later period, when the numbers of the Society have largely increased. And the reason is because when there were but few hands to do all the work, each member was obliged to share every task, and to learn a great many things in so doing ; whereas subdivision of labour comes with numbers, and commonly ends in greater mechanical accuracy of execution of one thing only by each person, and an entire lack of competence to superintend the organized whole, or to understand the relation of the several parts to one another ; which is precisely what is wanted not only in an official head, but in all members of the body which elects and counsels that head.

R. F. L.

A VISIT TO ST. SAVIOUR'S PRIORY.

It was a hot afternoon in the height of the London season, when the parks were thronged with fashionably-dressed pleasure-seekers, that I and two friends turned our backs on the West End, with all its whirl and jostle, to drive away eastwards on an expedition we had long been planning. Drones though we were, it was to a very busy corner of the social hive that we were going, where poverty reigned as supreme as did pleasure in the quarter which we had left behind us.

Some time ago we were much interested by a visit which we each of us received from a member of an Anglican Sisterhood established in the poorest part of Haggerston (beyond Bethnal Green), and the account she gave us of the Mission work in which these sisters are engaged determined us to see for ourselves the scene of their labours. St. Saviour's Priory,

Great Cambridge-street, Hackney-road, is the name of the home chosen by this little colony of brave, devoted women, many of them ladies, accustomed to all the comforts of a luxurious home. They originally formed part of the Sisterhood at East Grinstead, and nearly nine years ago they came from there to this densely-populated part of London, in order to see what they could do in helping to stem the tide of poverty, sickness, and misery all around. They worked manfully, with little aid or encouragement, and very small means at their disposal; but in spite of difficulties they struggled on, and in 1870 were able to take a house more in the centre of their work than the quarters where they had first established themselves. When they began their mission there were prejudices against them, chiefly on account of their dress, but now they are so well known and so universally respected as the helpers of all who are in trouble, that the very peculiarity of their costume is a protection to them, and they can penetrate with safety into low haunts where few men could venture, and where even the police can only go in pairs.

After a long noisy journey down Oxford-street, past the Holborn Viaduct, and through Smithfield, we found ourselves getting to a poorer and sadder neighbourhood, where pale faces looked at us with weary curiosity, and where we saw on every side evident signs of struggling and over-crowding poverty. When we had driven some way up the Hackney-road, which we had now reached, we grew puzzled as to the whereabouts of our destination. We drove up one street, which seemed the right one, but no signs of anything approaching to a "Priory" could we see. At last we stopped near a public-house, outside which a group of children were playing, and asked for directions from a man standing near. He shook his head, but one of the boys left his game and came running up to the carriage. 'St. Saviour's Priory!' he cried; 'oh, any one will show you where *that* is! I can tell you.' Off he started with a look of intelligence on his face which made us think that the sisters we had come to visit must have exercised a civilizing influence on this neighbourhood. As it turned out, we were not far from the object of our search, and at the corner of the very street we were in we drew up at the small door of a most unpretending-looking building. The door was opened by a bright-faced girl of about fifteen, who showed us into a room fitted up with forms, book-shelves, harmonium, &c., and told us we might there wait for Sister Jane Frances, who was, as yet, our only acquaintance among the sisters. She soon came, and told us, to our regret, that the 'mother' was ill and could not see us, but she herself would show us all there was to be seen. 'This, you see,' she said, 'is our class-room. I wish you could see it sometimes in the evenings when it is quite full of poor friends—mothers with babies in their arms, young men and boys, all looking so cheerful, and singing with such heartiness the songs and hymns we teach them.' Outside this room was a small court-yard, filled with plants and flowers, and with a space in the middle where games were played, and even miniature cricket matches could take place. Round the

court were the buildings occupied by the sisters. Their present house is part of a block of six at the corner of Great Cambridge-street, with workshops at the back, but by the help of friends they were enabled to buy these shops and convert them into a chapel and a class-room. Still they were much cramped for room, and though they have gradually enlarged their premises, and have made a work-room for their women, and a kitchen for their poor dinners, they have not yet space for all the work they wish to undertake, nor room to lodge the additional workers they want, for no less than four parishes now demand their services.

The first place to which Sister Jane Frances took us was the chapel, a small building, beautifully decorated inside by the hands of Mother Kate. One can quite imagine how the sisters draw refreshment and strength from the quiet moments of prayer there, besides the regular services, which must greatly help them through their days of unceasing toil. What struck us most about the sisters was the look of peace and cheerfulness on their faces, and the way in which they disclaimed all idea of being better than other people ; they seemed so filled with pity for the misery round them that they lost all consciousness of their own individuality in the yearning to help their poor neighbours with their whole strength. We looked into several of their rooms, which were all neat and clean, with a few prints and photographs in most, but very small is the space allowed to each, and even this they would have divided into half again had not the doctor authoritatively urged upon them the necessity of space and fresh air to recruit their wearied energies during the night. We then went to see the work-room, where we found several poor women at work. The sisters are most anxious not to pauperise their friends, but to give them the means of earning something for themselves, as they know well the demoralizing effects of gratuitous help. They cannot afford to pay much to the old women that come to the work-room, and who are only capable of coarse work, and they therefore are very glad of any orders for work, such as sheets, towels, or plain undergarments, which would enable them to keep up the work-room and not be under the sad necessity of refusing the application to employ women in real distress, because the expenses of buying materials, &c., will not allow them to employ more than a certain number. It would be a real charity if ladies would give them an occasional order for plain work ; and many who make presents of clothes or linen at Christmas would find they were doing a double kindness by having their gifts made up here.

The next thing we saw was the Guild-room, a most comfortable-looking place, ornamented with very beautiful work, done by one of the sisters. This was a room built by the sisters, and very sensibly as well as prettily lined inside with thin wooden boarding, which had a clean, wholesome effect, and also enabled the guild girls to knock nails in, as they could not do on a plaster wall, and hang up prints and photographs, and at Christmas time wreaths of evergreens. The guild consists of girls from the neighbourhood ; they are taken in as early as ten years old,

but many of them are grown-up young women, who work in the large shoe-factories near, or take in machine-work for shops. Here they assemble, sometime to the number of forty, in the evenings, and work, or read, or paste pictures into scrap-books for sick children ; in short they busy themselves in innocent amusement, and many must there be amongst them who have deep cause to bless the kind care which has given them the opportunities of employing their leisure hours, and thereby escaping from the temptations to which they are often exposed. Weekly sales of clothes take place in this room, a plan which has been of great use in giving the girls a pride in wearing tidy under-clothing, and neat, plain dresses, instead of gaudy finery, covering rags underneath, to which their class are much addicted. They generally remain in the guild till they marry ; even then they often return with their babies, who are affectionately called the 'grand-children of the guild.' They are very particular as to the character of any new candidate for their guild, and cannot bear the idea of any one bringing discredit upon it.

Time would fail me to tell of all the good works entered upon by these sisters, and steadily persevered in through countless difficulties and discouragements ; of their classes—singing-classes for young people, and the same for the parents and older friends ; Bible-classes for different ages ; night-schools at the Priory for young men, and girls' night-schools at the various parochial school-rooms. Then there are the children's dinners—good, solid dinners of meat, which ought to help the pale, sickly little creatures to grow up stronger men and women than they would otherwise do. They have also a Convalescent Home at Folkestone, where many a poor feeble life has received fresh vigour, and many an old wearied frame been rested and revived. And besides all these regular forms of work there is the visiting and nursing all the poor, sick, helpless people, who in that part of London are so crowded together that it seems almost hopeless to do them any good. In times of epidemic sickness the sisters are indeed angels of mercy, helpers to the panic-stricken, comforters to the bereaved, and devoted nurses, employing every resource of human patience and energy to save the lives that would have little chance if left to their miserable surroundings.

And shall we do nothing to help them ? Shall we leave them, isolated as they are from any aid of wealthy neighbours, to fight their battles against sin and misery quite alone ? We must recollect that no devotion, no perseverance in the face of obstacles, no patience can carry them on without help in money—surely that help will be forthcoming. Can we live our lives of luxury and complete home comforts and give no shame-stricken thoughts to those who have left homes quite as luxurious as ours and gone forth to do the work of mercy ? Can we look at our little ones, tenderly nurtured, shielded from every breath of cold wind, anxiously watched over in every moment of illness, and not strive to do something for these other little ones, just as dear to their Heavenly Father as are our own darlings, who have never known a

moment's tender care, who have gone through the bitter experience of days made terrible with hunger, and nights made sleepless with cold, and who owe all the comfort that has come into their cheerless little lives to the mother-like hands of the sisters of St. Saviour's Priory? Can we look with pride on the bright innocent girls of our guarded homes and not shudder to think of their exposure to the trials and temptations of a life of struggling poverty, like that through which the sisters help so many poor girls, guiding them to higher aims, and cheering them by pleasant employment and wholesome reading, till they see them comfortably settled as good useful wives and mothers, with some ambition to bring up their children safely and well. A great responsibility rests with us if we allow such as these to perish for want of sustenance. A very little help will go a long way, if many combine, each with their little—but let the help be as large as we can make it. But if any are narrow-minded enough to say 'We cannot help those who belong to a different section of our Church. We do not approve of ritualistic practices; and we cannot encourage those who adhere to them,' let them go and see for themselves. Let them observe the *work* of these sisters, surely they can sympathize with *that*, and leave aside for the time all minor questions of agreement in ceremonial and ritual. Let them notice how the subject of the sad differences in our Church is never touched on by those who are far too busy and too much wrapt up in their mission of help to trouble themselves with controversy. Whatever may be the opinions in which we might disagree with them, let us think of the words, 'By their fruits ye shall know them;' and if the rescue of many, many poor souls from the sloughs of misery and crime around them, and the comforting of many sick and friendless ones be the result of their labours, surely we, living in ease and comfort, with leisure to dwell on every fresh vexatious question of the day, cannot refuse our help to those devoted women, who may differ from us on a few points of dogma, but whose whole lives shame us by their consistent following in the footsteps of our blessed Lord and Saviour—theirs and ours.

M.C.H.

[Any parcels of old clothes, poor clothes, linen rag, remnants and scraps for patch-work, food or comforts for the sick, should be addressed to, 'THE MOTHER, ST. SAVIOUR'S PRIORY, 20, Great Cambridge-street, Hackney-road, E.C.']

CHRISTMAS EVE ON THE COAST OF NORTHUMBERLAND. 1873.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'THE HOUSE AMONG THE HILLS.'

Up from the distant south,
Up to the Tweed's broad mouth,
I travelled long and late,—
Not loving quite my fate,

Which for the Christmas-tide,
Close to the bleak sea-side,
From churches dear to me
In Christmas blazonry,
Brought me away so far
Under the northern star,
And set me there beside
The sea's incoming tide.

Oh, what a Christmas Eve !
And who could well believe
That in this northern clime,
In this mid-winter time,
And by this forceful sea,
So fair a day could be ?
From early morning's rise,
Till glow of sun-set skies,
A brilliant cloudless day,
More like a southern May ;
And airs so soft and mild,
Fit for a new-born child ;—
And this for heralding
The Birthday of our King.

Lift thine eyes unto the hills,—
What a sight thy vision fills !
Lift thine eyes unto the sea,—
What can pass its brilliancy ?
All is so transfused, and bright
In a glow of golden light ;
All the distance in a maze
Veiled in mists of glorious rays !—
Which is cloud, and which is land ?
Which is sea, and which is sand ?

Oh, what a breadth of light,
Makes all the zenith bright !
And on the horizon's ring
The low sun's colouring !
What tender opal hues,
What greens, and greys, and blues !
And then the low sweet cry
Of sea-lark flitting by—
And the great white-winged birds,
Like cloud-land's flocks and herds,

Rejoicing in the light,
 And bathing mid their flight.
 Oh, who could well believe
 That this was Christmas Eve ?

Like phalanx of the sea,
 The waves all mightily
 Come on their landward track,
 With all their hair blown back,
 And rainbows in their foam,
 Like kings returning home,
 Or conquerors rich with spoil
 From some far distant soil,
 And gain their native shore
 Like heroes from the war ;—
 The great song of the sea
 Sounding triumphantly !

Cuthbert's holy isle
 Receives the sun's last smile ;
 And now the stars come out,
 Like lamps all hung about
 In the great blue above,
 As if they watched for love ;
 And every one of them
 A star of Bethlehem !—
 No sheep or shepherds here,
 The great wide sea so near ;
 No bells from churches round
 But ocean's wondrous sound.
 No inland sounds and sights,
 Nor sheltered village lights ;
 But here and there may be
 Some light far out at sea ;
 And all that strange may seem
 Like fancies in a dream ;
 So unlike Christmas time
 Of the old inland clime !

‘ And now, my Lord, let me
 In my heart silently,
 Sing my low song to Thee
 Beside the fair wide sea !
 For though so changed is all,
 Scarce like Thy festival—

Yet here, too, I can find
Some tokens that remind
My heart of Thee and Thine—
Shadows of things Divine !
For though no pastoral dells
Are here, nor hallowed bells,
Yet I behold the sea,
And think of Galilee ;
Of Thee upon the shore,
As Thou didst stand of yore ;
Or from the sea didst teach
The crowds upon the beach ;
Or in the storm asleep
Alone upon the deep ;
And when Thy voice did quell
The winds, and billows' swell.

Then I think tenderly
Of Thine Eternity !
How from its hidden source
All through its winding course,
This full broad river flows
On to its blissful close,
In the great boundless sea,
Where it will ever be !

And in the sun's pure light
Making all earth so bright,
Surely Thy Love I see,
Which so transfigures me !
Gladness without alloy,
Turning my griefs to joy !

So, musing tenderly,
All makes me think of Thee,
And well content to be
At Christmas by the sea !'

And so I met the morn
When the dear Christ was born.

HINTS ON READING.

Homes of the London Poor. By Octavia Hill. (Macmillan.)

MISS HILL has wisely chosen the present time, when the recent passing of the Artisans' Dwellings' Act may be expected to have brought the subject into wider notice, to reprint a series of papers contributed by her during the last nine years to various magazines, and bearing on the questions with which that Act is intended to deal. Her practical experience, extending now over many years, of the difficulties to be surmounted by anyone who would deal with the great problem, how to decently house the working classes, without demoralizing them by giving that for which they make no return, makes this book especially valuable, indeed we should imagine almost indispensable to anyone who wishes to avail himself of the power given by the Act in order to benefit his poorer neighbours. For it should be clearly understood that it is merely an 'enabling' Act; the machinery is no doubt rendered by it simpler and more secure, but not in any way self-acting; individual effort is still required to put it in motion. And when all that this machinery, even so simplified, is competent to do has been done, when the 'various portions of many cities and boroughs' which are 'so built as to be highly injurious to the moral and physical welfare of the inhabitants' have been pulled down and re-constructed, and provision has been made 'for dwellings for the working class who may be displaced in consequence thereof' (we use the words of the preamble to the Act), then the real difficulty is just beginning. For Miss Hill's words cannot be too strongly impressed on the minds of those who undertake this work:—'The people's houses,' she says, are bad, 'partly because they are badly built and arranged; they are tenfold worse because their habits and lives are what they are. Transplant them to-morrow to healthy and commodious homes, and they would pollute and destroy them.' Hence she has thought it worth while to show a little what is needed in these courts, to help the inhabitants to be fit for far better ones, and more especially the way in which this can be done by volunteers, acting upon small groups of families, in a way which would be impossible to officials, whether employed by Government, or by such bodies as the Charity Organization Society. Not that she in any way undervalues these agencies; indeed, one of the papers reprinted in this volume is a report made in January of last year to the Local Government Board on the system existing in part of the parish of Marylebone, 'which aims at establishing a complete combination of official and volunteer agencies in dealing with Poor Law cases.' Our space does not allow us to go at any length into the way in which this is done; but the main point is the existence of a referee, who 'directs and superintends the visitors, attends the meetings of the District, and Relief Committee of the Charity Organization Society, and is the medium through which the Board of Guardians acquire information otherwise inaccessible to them.' To this referee, moreover, and to her staff of visitors the School Board has intrusted in this district the working of the Compulsory Clauses of the Education Acts. Thus the volunteers are brought into contact with the poor in almost every possible point, by which means the dangers of the various agencies clashing is removed, and as Miss Hill says 'facts concealed from the visitors in one capacity are revealed to them in another.' Moreover, no power of deciding as to the relief to be given is committed to the visitors, so that the people learn to regard them as friends who will 'listen to and represent their claims for relief,' but not as almoners; and in the case of the Charity Organization Committee, decisions which must often seem severe and stern at the moment, lose this aspect when they have been discussed and explained by one who is regarded as a private friend. And this brings us to the more immediate question of housing the poor. Miss Hill shows how when the houses have been acquired and the more important general improvements in drainage, water supply, and so forth, effected, the next step is by careful and patient supervision to teach the people self-